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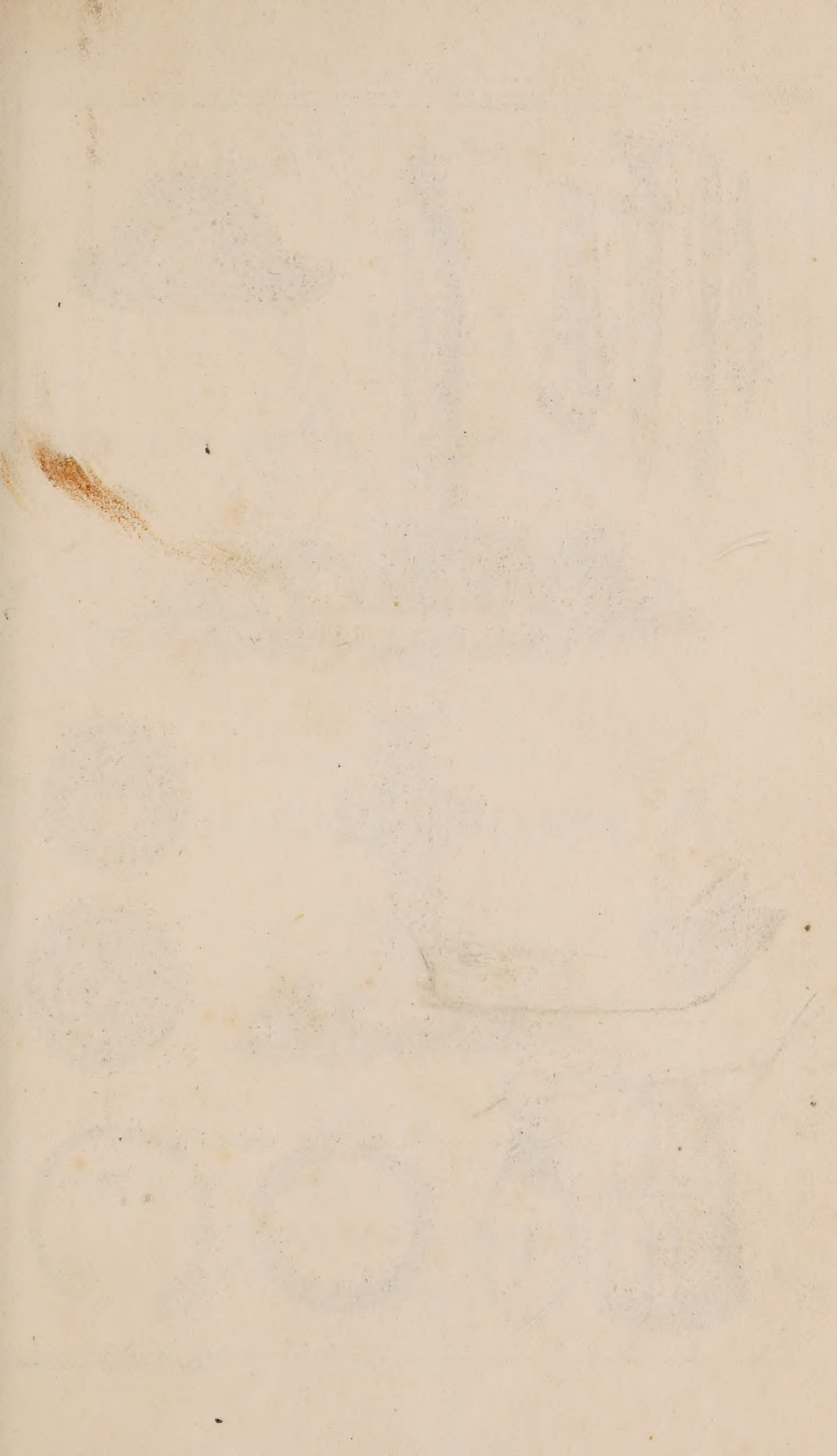
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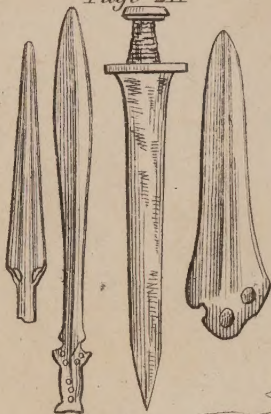
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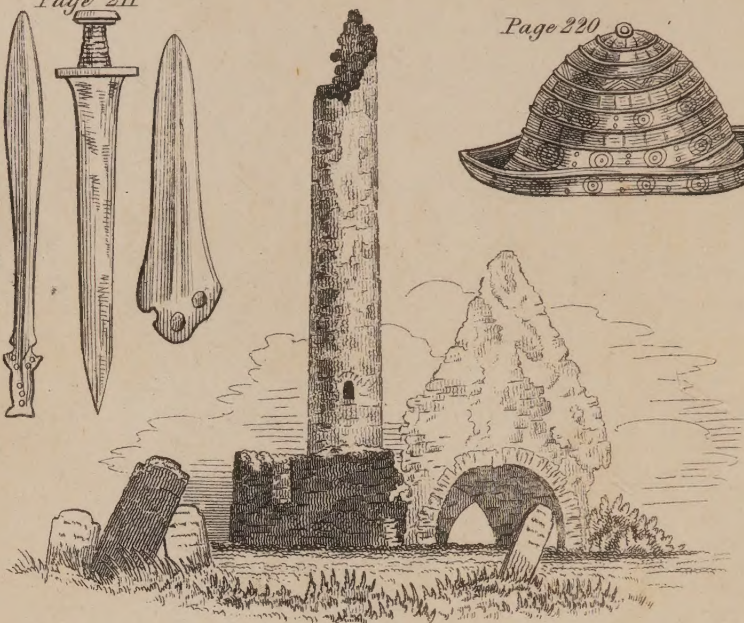
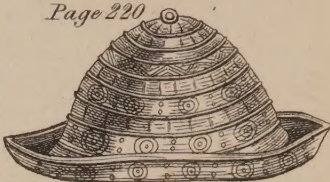
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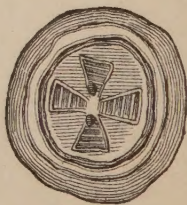
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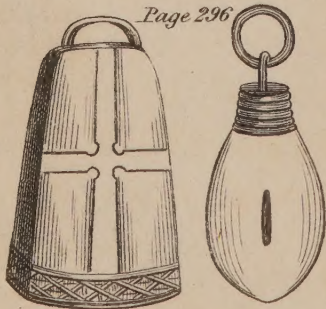
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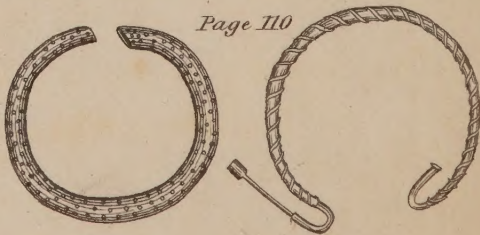
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SKETCHES
OF
IRISH HISTORY

ANTIQUITIES, RELIGION, CUSTOMS, AND MANNERS

BY
THE AUTHOR OF "THREE YEARS IN ITALY"

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH

DUBLIN
JOHN ROBERTSON 3 GRAFTON STREET
LONDON R GROOMBRIDGE

MDCCCXLIV



Thomas I. White, Printer, 65, Fleet-street.

INTRODUCTORY PREFACE,

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

IF the addition of the following historical sketch of early Irish history to the many that have preceded it, should be deemed a work of supererogation, I must take to myself no small share of the blame. The dear friend who supplies it originally wrote a part of it in a series of letters, for the pages of the *Christian Lady's Magazine*; and it proved so acceptable to many readers, that I could not but warmly recommend her making it a separate publication. With this design, the Letters have been carefully revised, and several portions of them re-written. Considerable and valuable additions of interesting historical facts have also been given, and the whole has been arranged and printed in separate Chapters.

It is strange that, in the face of multiplied "*Histories of Ireland*," the ignorance prevailing with respect to the earlier periods of that history

is greater than any that we like to plead guilty to, in reference to the most remote, barbarous lands. In England it is wholly overlooked ; and even within the limits of the Green Isle itself there has been no lack of the same oblivious prejudice. I say deliberately, prejudice ; for what else could lead a people, a refined, educated people, to acquiesce in the monstrous anomaly of viewing their native country in the light of a *terra incognita* ; a land whose splendid relics of by-gone architectural and other grandeur, were fitted only for some enterprising antiquary to grope about in ; and the stirring legends of ancient glory suitable but for the lips of those who, having never learned to despise their native language, might recount the deeds of other days over the dying embers of a turf fire, in the mud cabin of some dreary bog.

To these two parties—to the persevering antiquary, and the patriotic peasant, we do indeed mainly owe what has been preserved to us of Ireland's early fame ; and the more attentively we examine them, the better they are found to harmonize in their testimony, respectively borne. The Christian will not under-value such helps to a right view of God's dealings with this most interesting country : he will trace in her earliest conflicts, in her intestine wars, and fierce struggles of rival aspirants, the ever-changeful, yet always

consistent manifestation of the power with which the god of this world holds fast a captive prize. Always intellectual, enterprising, energetic, the ancient race of Ireland might have been led "to feel after God, if haply they might find him," had not the subtle enemy perpetually embroiled them in mutual quarrels, at once originating from, accompanying, and producing a thirst for conquest, and for revenge. At length the morning of truth dawned on the combatants: their swords were sheathed, and the powers of their minds being directed from above into the right track, they became a light to the surrounding nations, heralds of the gospel throughout Europe, so vividly did they reflect the day-beam from on high, alike in their lives and in their writings. Yet again, Satan, prevailed to draw a cloud over this brilliant sky, and Popery re-enacted with double fury, and more ruinous success, the part performed by Paganism of old.

Upon this branch of the subject I do not now enter, since the design of the present volume does not embrace it; but I view with deep interest the progress of this species of knowledge among the youth of the growing generation, earnestly hoping that they will turn it to account for the benefit of a country and a race, to which all we of English birth, and all of English descent now naturalized in Ireland, are bound by ties not to

be broken. We are bound by responsibilities too little heeded of men, but very distinct and very awfully strong in the sight of God. "Brotherly kindness" has, indeed, of late years, and among sincere Christians, taken place of that contempt with which the native race had been for centuries regarded, and which was retorted by them with ten-fold scorn and hatred against those whom they were taught to designate Saxon intruders. In no country under heaven, probably, was the command to "honour all men" so universally set at nought as in Ireland; and when we become a little better acquainted than we usually are with the records that every peasant is familiarized to from his cradle, we may more readily comprehend the root and the growth of that rancorous hostility and disdain with which they too generally regard us. Popery has unchristianized them, as she does every people enclosed in her net; and the deeds of their pagan forefathers wear in their eyes no repulsive aspect: they accord well with the genius and spirit of the present race, who long to emulate their exploits, and to drive from the soil such as they are taught to regard as natural enemies; and who are indeed the natural enemies of the evil spirit now working in the children of disobedience, inasmuch as they are, or at least all profess to be, and very many are, the faithful soldiers and servants of Christ.

We may turn a right knowledge of early Irish history to a far more practical use than the history of any other country, seeing to what purpose it is applied by the lineal descendants of those of whom it treats ; and by conceding a little to them on the point of ancestral pride, and realizing in ourselves what its fruits must be, where the humbling spirit of a pure faith has not cast down imaginations, and things that exalt themselves against Christ, we may discover a shorter and surer avenue to their warm hearts, than we have, generally, yet availed ourselves of.

The period of which my dear friend has principally treated, was anterior not only to the introduction, but to the very invention of Popery. The policy of those deadly enemies to Ireland, who lord it over the faith and the consciences of her aboriginal race, is to identify the two ; to represent all the famous warriors of old as fighting under and for the crucifix, and by the most impudent anachronisms to bolster up their assumptions. It is no small matter to be enabled to combat this formidable error : to shew, by means of a correct acquaintance with the real antiquities of Irish history, the falsehood of these tales—the utter disconnexion of such epoch with the modern innovations of Popery. On these grounds I am anxious to see my friend's little volume in every family, every school, and its contents impressed

on the memory of our youngsters, while those of maturer age may privately acquire a lesson, perhaps too long deferred. I would fain apply to this beloved land, what is said of another afflicted race, "It is the time of Jacob's trouble; but we shall be saved out of it." Sure I am, that to lend a hand in any way to the blessed work of her country's deliverance, or even to the amelioration of any among the numerous evils that oppress her race, would be to my Christian sister a reward far beyond what the poor fleeting breath of human applause, or all the hoards of worldly wealth could possibly bestow; and to the blessing of God I feel it a privilege to commend this unobtrusive little volume, knowing that He can cause the weakest effort of a willing hand to prosper in the great work that His servants have to do.

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

INTRODUCTION.

IN order to interest young persons in the past history of their country, the following Sketches have been prepared. The information is condensed into the smallest compass, that young readers may be saved from the toil and weariness of exploring long, uninteresting, and dubious narratives. The compilers of Irish history generally attempt nothing new ; they walk in the steps of those who have preceded them with little variation ; but there is still an unbeaten path—a wide and unexplored field open for investigation.

We would first take a glance at our country in the dark days of paganism, and then pass on to the time when the Sun of Righteousness arose and shed a glory over this little western island, while the greater part of the earth's inhabitants were still involved in the midnight of heathenism. That there was such a day of brightness in Ireland, and that the Irish were then an enlightened people, there are too many concurring testimonies to render it any longer a doubtful assertion. The sacred Scriptures were readily received by the people ; and, reading them for themselves in simplicity and truth, they drew from their pages the

pure doctrines of the gospel. Romanism had not corrupted or biassed their minds—there was no false teacher to forbid the laity the use of that divine revelation, which God himself gave with an express command, that it should be perused by all, and taught, not to grown persons only, but to children, as they sat in the house, or walked by the way. The Irish shewed their veneration and love for the Scriptures by their care of them. The small boxes in which they preserved them still exist, as monuments of their respect for the sacred volume. This important fact is fully established, by means of the laborious researches of several well known authors whose works are before the public. The reader is particularly referred to the writings of the Rev. Christopher Anderson, and Henry Monck Mason, L.L.D., to whose instructive volumes, as well as to those of Sir W. Betham, the writer of these pages is much indebted.

Two of the principal historians of Ireland are Keating and Leland. Keating has commenced his history, which was written in Irish, at so early a period that it is impossible, from the obscurity in which they are involved, to substantiate or place implicit credence in all his details. In the preface to the edition of his history, which was translated into English by Dermot O'Connor, antiquary of the kingdom of Ireland, and published in 1809, it is stated that Keating studied in the college of Salamanca, in Spain, for twenty-three years. On his return to Ireland he was appointed parish priest of Tybrud. He was considered to be learned, very zealous in religion,

and of a patriotic spirit. In the zealous discharge of his sacerdotal duties he exasperated the temper of a man who became an inveterate enemy, and obliged him to take refuge from his persecution in the retired fastnesses of the wood of Aharla, which lies between the Galtee mountains and Tipperary. In this concealment, he wrote his history, not for the desire of gain, but for the benefit of his countrymen.

His esteem for the Irish language is described in the following lines :—

The Irish language is completely sweet ;
In aid of it no foreign e'er did meet.
A copious, free, keen, and extending voice,
And mellifluent, brief ; for mirth most choice.
Although the Hebrew language be the first,
And that, for learning, Latin be the best,
Yet still, from them, the Irish ne'er was found,
One word to borrow, to make its proper sound.

He died in the year 1644—at least that is the date of the inscription to his memory in raised letters over the door of the church at Tybrud.

There are many incredible legends in his history, for in those early times people believed in superstitions dreams and visions which at present would not be listened to. The reasons which Keating assigns in the preface to his work for writing his History of Ireland, were the means he possessed, from his knowledge of the Irish language, of becoming acquainted with public chronicles and ancient authors which enabled him to rescue his country from the fabulous relations which misrepresented the character of its

people, and to raise their memories from the oblivion in which they had been buried. He says, "I trace the antiquity of the Irish much higher, and with better authority than other writers, and give a particular account of the most ancient Irish, the Gadelians; and if any one should suppose that I bestow too large encomiums upon that brave and illustrious tribe, or speak with partiality of their exploits, let it be considered that I have no temptation to be unjust, being myself originally of English extraction."

He then states that he is induced to write his history, because every modern historian who had written on Ireland, while they commended the country, despised the people; and that he was led to pursue the untrodden path of searching the original records, in order to vindicate the character of his countrymen, and compile "a true and impartial history." After eulogising the character of the ancient Irish for their bravery and learning, he remarks that "no people in the world took more care to preserve the authority of their public records," and that these were usually presented in their public assemblies in the presence of "the most learned and eminent antiquarians in the country."

These records, written in the Irish language, he adds, "contain particular relations of all the memorable battles and transactions that happened in Ireland from the first account of time, and give an account of the genealogies of the principal families in the island." He considers these records as good authority, from the consideration that they were the production of

“above two hundred chroniclers and antiquarians, whose business was to preserve and record all actions and affairs of consequence.” These men had revenues and salaries settled upon them for their services; and their annals and histories were submitted for examination to public assemblies, composed of persons of rank, and eminent for learning, who met for that very purpose.

These chronicles, he believed, from the number of the public registers in whose hands copies were placed, were never wholly destroyed by the Danish invaders; and this, he states, was an advantage that no other country in Europe possessed; for the Romans, Gauls, Goths, Saxons, Saracens, Moors, and Danes, generally suppressed or destroyed the public records of the countries they invaded; but in Ireland this was rendered impossible by the multiplicity of copies, and the care with which they were preserved by the antiquarians. And as to the accuracy of the genealogies, Keating observes, that there were in Ireland a learned body of men called Druids or sooth-sayers, whose peculiar duty it was to take a strict account of them, “and also to record the most memorable transactions that happened in the kingdom.”

The Rev. Dr. Leland, Fellow of Trinity College, published his History of Ireland about the middle of the last century; but with the exception of a short “preliminary discourse on the ancient state of that kingdom,” he commences his history from the invasion of Henry II. In this “Discourse,” he states, that “it is no part of his design to explore the antiquities of

the Irish to decide on the authenticity of their scattered records;" and he further adds, that he "is particularly disqualified for such attempts by being totally unacquainted with the Irish language."

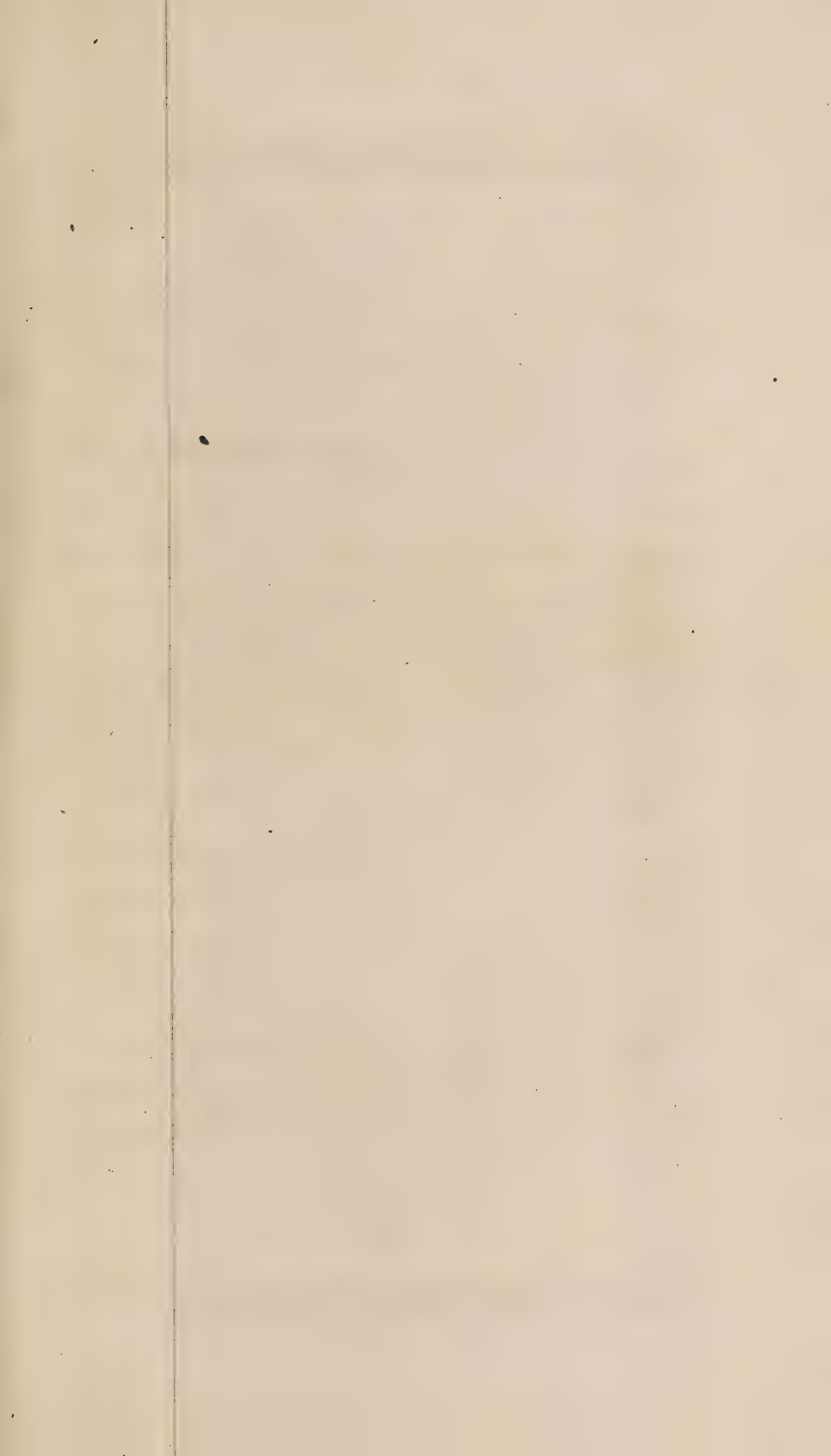
Dr. Johnson has given his opinion of Leland's history in the following words:—"Dr. Leland begins his history too late; the ages which deserve an exact inquiry are those; for such there were, when Ireland was the school of the West—the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. If you could give a history, though imperfect, of the Irish nation, from its conversion to Christianity to the invasion from England, you would amplify knowledge with new views and new objects."

We have endeavoured to follow the advice of Dr. Johnson, in giving a history of our country until the arrival of Henry II. It is not designed, nor would it, indeed, be practicable, to give a closely connected narrative of early events in this country; but in addition to the most important and best authenticated facts of Irish history, we have studied to introduce a variety of valuable information relating to its antiquities, and the religion, customs, and manners of its inhabitants, which, it is to be hoped, will prove interesting and instructive to many, especially to our young readers.

A continuation of the history from the period of the English invasion is now preparing for publication.

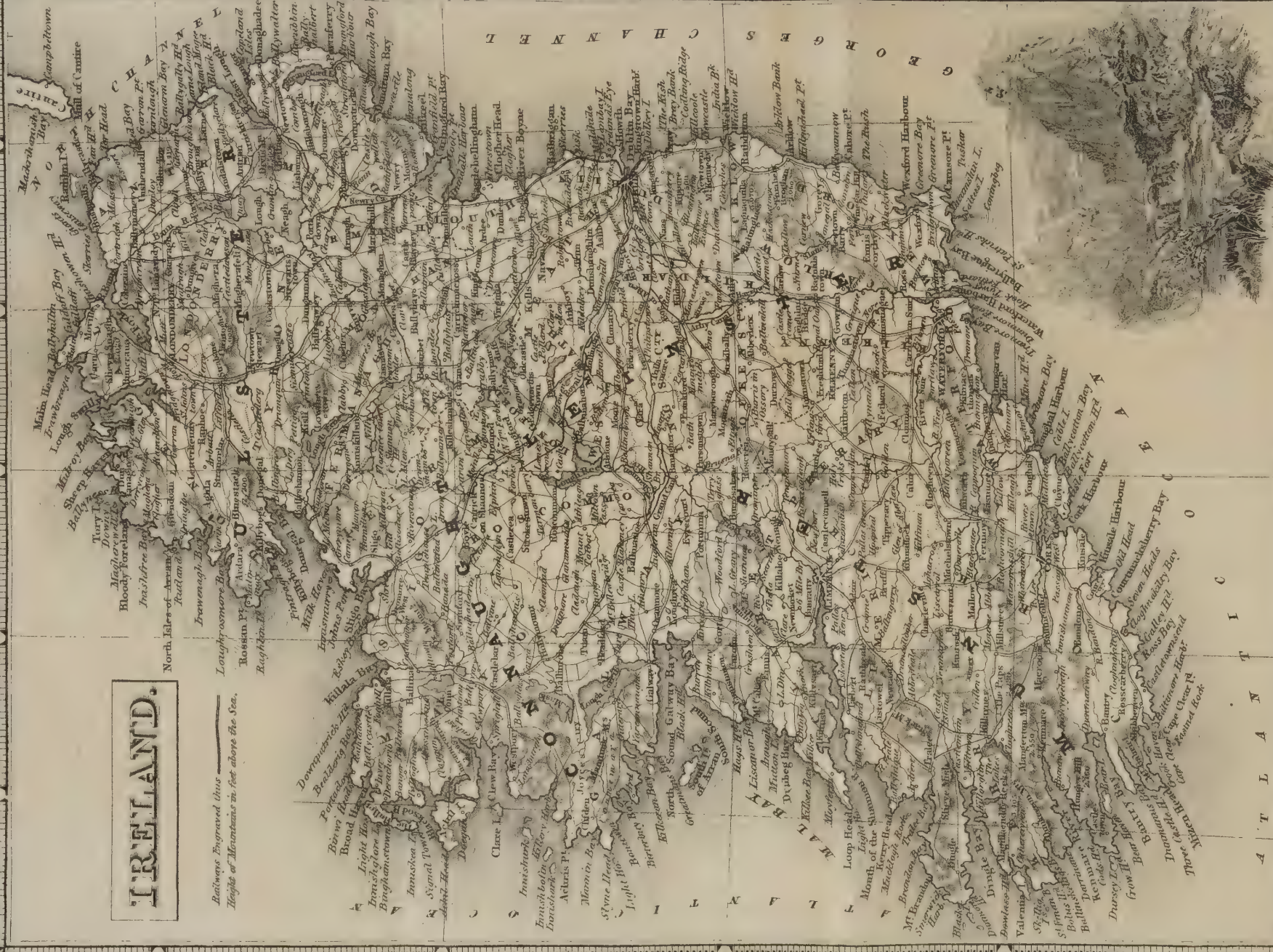
S. M.

CLAPHAM COMMON,
FEBRUARY, 1844.



IRELAND.

Railways Engraved thus —
Heights & Mountains in feet above the Sea.



LONGITUDE WEST

Engraved by James Peterkin, Dublin.

SKETCHES OF IRISH HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

Ireland's first name in the native language—First inhabitants called Firbolgs—Institution of Tailtean, and tilts and tournaments—Famous Coronation-stone called Lia fail—The use made of it—Its removal to Scotland, and afterwards to Westminster—An account of the Milesians—The Scythian race of kings—Leaber Gabala—Fileas—Sir Isaac Newton's account of the first settlers—Arts, navigation, and letters, introduced into Europe by the Phenicians—The Irish Beth-luisnon—The Milesian invaders encounter a storm—One of their vessels wrecked on Scielg Mithill—Account of the island—Landing of three Milesian brothers—Battle of Tailtean—Death of Amergin—Ireland divided between Heremon and Heber—Contention between the brothers—Death of Heber.

IRELAND's first name, in the native language, was *Inis na Bhfiodkbhuidhe*, which signifies The Woody Isle. It was also called Inis Alga, The Noble Isle, and was inhabited by a race of Belgians called Firbolgs by the Irish which claimed the same descent as the Scythians or Gadelians, originally from Magog, the son of Japhet.

This wandering tribe (the sons of Nemedius) were driven from their former settlement in Greece by harsh treatment. In order to keep down their growing power, they were compelled to carry earth in leathern bags from the valleys to the tops of the highest mountains and craggy rocks, that those places which nature had made bare and barren, might be rendered fertile. From this employment their name is derived. *Fir* signifies men; *Bolg*, bag. Ireland became their refuge and resting-place from hard labours and tyranny, until they were again driven from their strongholds. New settlers arrived from Greece by whom these older inhabitants were overcome and mostly slain.

Mention is made of one of the last of the Firbolgs, Lughaidh, (surnamed the Long-Handed), King of Ireland, as having instituted the assembly of Tailtean, and appointed tilts and tournaments resembling the old Olympic games which were observed every year upon the first day of August; a day still distinguished by the name of Lughnansa, now called *Lammas*.

Ireland was called Inisfail from a famous stone named Lia fail which derived its name from the city Falias, whence the Tuatha de Danans removed it to Ireland.

“ From this strange stone did Inisfail obtain
Its name, a tract surrounded by the main.”

It was also called the fatal stone or stone of destiny. Hector Boetius in his history of Scotland calls it Saxum fatale. It was held in high veneration as an enchanted stone, and is mentioned by many historians as

having the peculiar property of making a terrific sound, resembling thunder, so loud as to be heard at a great distance when any of the royal Scythian race was crowned upon it ; but the stone was silent if the elect sovereign was not of that race.

“ Unless the fixed decrees of fate give way,
The Scots shall govern, and the sceptre sway,
Where’er this stone they find, and its dread sound obey.”

All the different monarchs of Ireland, in succession, were crowned upon this stone, until the year of our Lord 513, in the reign of Murtough, (the son of Earca) whose brother Fergus the Great, having subdued the Scottish nation and obtained the crown, sent to Ireland for the stone of destiny that on it he might be crowned and thus secure the succession to the Scythian race. Upon so great a consideration, Murtough, willingly yielding to his brother’s wishes, parted with this treasure ; and although, as Keating observes, from the birth of the Redeemer the stone lost its great charm of sending forth solemn sounds, still it was held in high veneration for some innate virtue it was supposed to possess.

Some of our readers may have seen the old chair in Westminster Abbey in which this famous stone is now placed. In Rapin’s history of England we learn that in the year 1296, Edward the First, when he so easily obtained the title of Scotland’s King, took possession of the “ stone on which the inauguration of their kings was performed. The people of Scotland had all along placed in that stone a kind of fatality. They fancied

that whilst it should remain in their country their state should remain unshaken ; but the moment it should be removed from thence great revolutions would ensue. For this reason Edward had it conveyed from Scone that he might make the Scots believe the time of the dissolution of their monarchy was come, and put an end to all hope of recovering their liberty.

“ Kenith, King of the Scots, having made a great slaughter of the Picts near the monastery of Scone, placed a stone there enclosed in a wooden chair for the inauguration of the kings. It had been brought out of Ireland into *Argile* and King Edward caused it to be conveyed to Westminster. On it was engraven this distich :—

“ ‘ Ni fallat Fatum, Scoti quocumque locatum,
Inveniunt lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem.’ ”—CAMB.

Keating remarks that in its present position under the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, the prophecy concerning it seems to be accomplished ; for the royal family of the Stuarts succeeded to the throne of England soon after the removal of this stone. This family was lineally descended from the Scythian race, from Maine Leamhna son of Core, King of Munster, son of Luighdheach, son of Oilioll, son of Fiacha Muilleathan, King of Munster, son of Eogan Mor, son of Oilioll Ollum, King of Munster, who descended lineally from Heberus Fionn, son of Milesius,* King of Spain, every prince of which illustri-

* In Paxton's Illustrations, he tells us of a fragment of Milesius, the ancient historian of Phenicia, by Abydenes—quoted by Eusebius.

ous family, successively received the crown upon this stone.

Fergus the Great, a descendant from Heremon, was the first King of Scotland of the Scythian or Gadelian race. He subdued the kingdom and was the first absolute monarch of Scotland who acknowledged no foreign yoke. Some of the Picts had the title of Kings of Scotland; yet they were no more than tributary princes to the Kings of Ireland from the reign of Heremon who drove them out of Ireland and compelled them to settle in Scotland.

According to the testimony of an Irish antiquary, “the Irish kings of the line of O’Donell, sat upon the summit of a hill, surrounded with the principal nobility and gentry of their country; one of the chief of them advancing towards him presented him with a straight white wand, and upon the delivery of it he used this form—‘Receive O King the command of thine own country and distribute justice impartially among thy subjects.’”

The ceremony of the rod may appear trifling, but it contained “an excellent moral; it was straight and white to recommend uprightness in judgment, and to intimate that a prince should rule with clean hands unstained with the blood of his people.”

We shall pass over the details of the enchantments and spells by which the Tuatha* de Danans possessed themselves of this noble island. They are as absurd as Keating’s confused account of the first invasion of

* The word Tuatha signifies leader.

Ireland before the flood. From mysterious and fabulous legends he must have taken them.

The next invaders and conquerors of Ireland, the Gadelians, seem to have been a branch of the same tribe, sprung from the same Scythian ancestor, Magog. Josephus observes that the Grecians call the Scythians by the name of Magogi because they were the descendants of Magog. Historians give them the character of a brave and generous people.

We come now to inquire who the Milesians were, since from various sources of information, we are taught to believe, that they were the true race which established themselves in Ireland.

Policronicon and other foreign authors call the Milesians, or posterity of Gadelas, Scyti, or Scythians. Sir James Ware says, "The learned know how common the name of the Scythians is among ancient writers, and it is a received opinion of the most diligent inquirers into the antiquities of Ireland, that the European or Celto-Scythians, divers times sent colonies into Ireland." From these Scythians came that race of kings in number 181, who ruled Ireland for so long a period. These were all of the same blood and descendants, in a direct line, from Milesius and Gadelas. According to the account of Walsingham in his Hypodigma, "After the host of Pharoah was overwhelmed in the Red Sea the Egyptians drove out a Scythian prince who resided among them lest he should take advantage of the weakness of the government and make an attempt upon the crown. When he was expelled the country with all his followers, he

came to Spain, where he and his people lived many years and became numerous, and from thence they came into Ireland."

Another account states that at a time of great scarcity, when by reason of a long period of drought a famine was produced in Spain, these people having great confidence in the bravery of their soldiers, resolved on seeking out a more plentiful land to dwell in and being directed by Caicer, the chief among their priests or Druids, who predicted that the posterity of Gadelas should obtain possession of a western island, they steered their course westward, and discovered our Emerald Isle called Erin, which signifies the island of the West.

There is an old book entitled *Leaber Gabala*, i. e. the Book of Invasions, the production of a very ancient author which contains the accounts given by the native Fileas who were the learned men or philosophers of those early times. Their accounts of the invasions and first inhabitants of Ireland generally coincide with foreign testimonies.

That Ireland was peopled by a colony of ancient Spaniards is a generally received opinion. There are many circumstances which corroborate the truth of the ancient records in this statement; and the Irish character still partakes of that which the Universal History gives of the ancient Spaniards,—“a brave, free, noble, and hospitable nation; possessed of all the virtues of the old Celts and inheriting fewer of their vices than any other of their descendants.”

In Sir Isaac Newton's *Chronology* (Dublin edit.) a

colony of Spaniards is mentioned, by the name of Scots,* or Scythians, settled in Ireland in the fourth age of the world.

In the accounts of the native Fileas, nearly the same record is transmitted to us. The Fileas in their several departments, took in all the subjects of poetry and became not only the directors of the public taste, but also of manners. The Irish monarchs were ever attended by their Fileas, Bards, and Croteries, i. e. musicians, both in court and camp, from whom they received information, advice, and entertainment. A saying of one of these is transmitted to us. Teig Mac Darg, a Filea in the household of O'Brien of Thonond, thus reminded his patron of his own importance, or rather that of his profession,—“ Though it be every man's duty to possess the ear of his sovereign with useful truths ; yet it is more particularly the duty of the Filea ; for to such alone it is that princes lend an ear.”

Newton, who in his Chronology quotes the best authorities, states, that soon after the dispersion of the Phenicians into the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, the great Egyptian, Sesostris began his conquests and subjected most part of the then known world, and Spain among the rest, to his dominion. This event took place, according to Newton, in the days of Solomon. Spain derived the knowledge of letters from the Greeks and also from the Phenicians, who occupied the sea-coast.

* Scuits or Scots, in the Celtic, signifies restless wanderers.

The arts, navigation, and letters, it is well known, were first introduced into Europe by the Phenicians. Our ancient Irish bards celebrate Phenius as the instructor of their ancestors on the continent, and the Phenician alphabet is in part retained in the Irish Bethluisnon.

It is said that the Irish language is called Gaelic from Gadalas ; and from Eberus Fionn the island was named Hibernia, and from Ir, Irlanda. These names, together with Heremon and Amergin, we find among the Milesian invaders.

In approaching the western coast of Desmond, these Spanish invaders encountered a storm, and many of their vessels were foundered. That of Ir is particularly mentioned. There is a small island called Sceilg Mithill,* which is a solitary rock some leagues from land. Against it the impetuous waves dashed the vessel of one of the bravest of the Milesian princes, and he was lost with all his followers. Heremon, Heber, and Amergin with difficulty effected a landing,—the first at Inbher† Colpa, (now called Drogheda), the two others at Inbher Sceine, in the county of Kerry.

* The top of Sceilg Mithill is flat with little depth of earth. It measures three acres in breadth and is the resort of numerous wild fowl which fatten upon it. Round this islet are precipices, nearly inaccessible, which tower magnificently over the foaming surge beneath. Difficult and dangerous as the ascent is, there are many who expose themselves to the risk for the sake of the birds, which they contrive to ensnare, and their flesh affords a delicious repast. This island is still frequented by Popish devotees.

† Inbher signifies river.

They had many successful encounters with the Tuatha de Danans ; and we find one record in particular of the Battle of Tailtean in which these last were totally defeated, and their kings, together with most of their forces, slain. All who escaped the general slaughter fled for concealment into the woods and caverns of the country, leaving the land to the conquerors. After some time they crept forth from their hiding-places and by degrees becoming familiar with the new inhabitants, obtained the liberty of subjects.

Amergin having lost his life in this contest, the two remaining brothers, Heremon and Heber, divided the country between them.

“ The two commanders shared the isle between them :
The north division Heremon enjoyed—
From the rich vale, where in delightful streams
The Boyne, the darling of the ocean, flows.
Southward from thence, the royal Heber reigned,
And his dominion to the sea extended.”

For about a year there was no rivalry between the brothers : but afterwards their peace was broken, and a fierce contest commenced which ended in the death of Heber, leaving Heremon sole monarch of Erin.

By some it has been said that this account of the invasion of Ireland must be a fabrication by reason of the art of navigation being then unknown, as also the use of the chart and compass, and that there was no such thing as shipping known in the world at that

period of time when it is said the Milesians invaded Ireland. But this assertion is founded in the grossest ignorance ; for since the deluge there has at least been some kind of shipping. Noah's ark was a great ship built by the order and under the direction of the Almighty ; and this vessel may have served as a model for other vessels, whereby soon after the flood men passed from island to island, peopling different nations, according as Divine Providence marked out for them the bounds of their habitation. Several islands, far remote in the seas, were inhabited by the increasing posterity of Noah, long before the use of chart or compass was discovered. To deny this, would be to deny what the most early accounts affirm. And cannot that God who endowed man with intelligence and the means of inventing the chart and compass, be his pilot without them ? Great and small ships are mentioned in the Bible. St. Paul sailed in a large ship, since there were on board 276 souls. There are many records in Irish history of Africans who at several periods of time visited Ireland, and gave accounts of certain stars worshipped by the mariners as their good or evil guides over the deep and distant seas.

Eusebius and other historians speak of the Grecian fleet before Troy, and of much shipping and long voyages, 1249 years before the birth of Christ, when the use of chart or compass was unknown. Why, then, should the Gadelians be excluded, who were accounted an ingenious, adventurous, and warlike people, from seeking out an island for their habitation ?

The stars, Castor and Pollux, were their compass.

And we hear of the storm which Jonah for his disobedience encountered at sea, 862 years before Christ. David, in speaking of the great and wide sea, says, "There go the ships." Psalm civ. 25. And again,— "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep." Psalm cvii. 23-30.

CHAPTER II.

Ereamhon's reign—The arrival of the Picts in Ireland—Heremon's reign—Iriel, called the Prophet—Eithriel's good reign—Tighermas reigned A.M. 2816—The first golden mine discovered—Different dyes found out—Introduction of idolatrous worship—The place of slaughter—Tighermas struck dead by lightning, in the plain of adoration—Names of places in Ireland, and ornaments found bear testimony to idolatrous worship—Sacred groves and wells—Fairies—Banshee—Great tribunal of the Druids—Baal's fire—Worship of the heavenly bodies—Worship of fire and water—The Cromleach—Curious caves—Veneration of old trees—The Druids—The oak and misletoe.

IT is stated in the annals of Inisfail, &c., that Ereamhon, the first of the Milesian race in Ireland, reigned fourteen years sole monarch. In the beginning of his reign a people came into Ireland from Thracia. They were called Picts, because they painted their faces with several sorts of colours, which gave them a fierce and horrible appearance. They landed in the east part of Leinster, and fought a battle with the Laganiens, in which the prince of Leinster was wounded, and many of his followers slain. When this news reached Ereamhon, he went out with a considerable force against the Picts, whom he completely defeated; nor would he allow them any footing in Ireland, but sent them off to a country

north-east of this island, now called Scotland, to which he also sent many of the progeny of Breogan, called Brigantes, and of the Tuatha de Danans. Cathluan was the first king of the Picts in Albain, or Scotland. After him 60 Pictish kings reigned, ending with Constantine.

Heremon reigned in Ireland from A.M. 2738 to 2752. He left three sons, Muimhne, Luighne, and Laighre, who reigned conjointly and peaceably for three years, at the expiration of which period the elder brother died, and their cousins, the sons of Heber Fionn, *i. e.* the Fair, rebelled against the survivors, both of whom were slain in battle. There remained still a younger son of Heremon: Iriel, who was famous in these early times. He was revenged for the death of his brothers, by that of his four cousins, who fell in battle. After four successful battles, Iriel was suffered to reign unmolested for a time; during which interval he did much for the promotion of agriculture, and laboured to effect other improvements in Ireland. He cleared a great part of the country of woods, and built seven royal palaces. He was wise and learned, and wrote a history of the Gadelians. By some it is said that he reigned ten years; by others twenty. From a habit of foretelling events, he was called Iriel the Prophet. He was succeeded by his son Eithriel, who began to reign in 2766, and for twenty years was monarch of Ireland. He was also distinguished for learning, and probably finished the history and travels of the Gadelians, which his father had commenced. He was likewise remarkable for his valour and military ac-

complishments. In his time great part of Connaught and Leinster were cleared of wood. But his good reign and his life were terminated in a battle fought against him by Conmaol, the grandson of Heber Fionn, who gained the victory and obtained the crown in the year 2786; he being the first who reigned in Ireland as absolute monarch of the Heberian race. He spent a life of warfare with the family of Here-mon, and came off conqueror in 25 pitched battles.

We shall not follow Keating in his long list of kings, many of whose names are merely mentioned; for however they might interest some who love to trace genealogies, they could not profit the young people for whom these Sketches are written. For the same reason we shall pass over many bloody battles and inhuman barbarities, which are recorded to have taken place in these dark times of paganism.

In 2816 Tighermas commenced his reign. He was of the posterity of Heremon, and the grandson of the learned Eithriel. In his reign the first golden*

* An experienced engineer, Richard Griffith, Esq., in his "Report to the Royal Dublin Society, on the Metallic Mines in Leinster," in 1828, says—"If we may judge from the number of ancient mine excavations which are still visible in almost every part of Ireland, it would appear that an ardent spirit for mining adventure must have pervaded this country at some very remote period. In many cases, no tradition that can be depended upon, now remains of the time or people by whom the greater part of these works were originally commenced. It is worthy of remark, that many of our mining excavations exhibit appearances similar to the surface workings of the most ancient mines in Cornwall, which are generally attributed to the Phenicians."

Of the Ballycastle coal works, on the coast of Antrim, the Rev. W. Hamilton gives the following account:—"The anti-

mine was discovered in this country, near the river Liffey, by a man named Juchadhan or Uchan, who, being expert in the working of metals, the management of the ore was committed to his care.

About the same period of time, different dyes were found out, particularly blue and green, and the people also began to decorate their persons. Tighermas enacted a new law respecting clothing. The slaves were ordered to appear in one colour only. A soldier had liberty to wear two, and a commanding officer three. Gentlemen, or farmers of property who entertained strangers hospitably, were privileged to wear four colours; and the nobility who ranked higher were to have five. Persons of the highest rank, in which were included the king, the queen, the chronologers, and men of eminent learning, were allowed to wear six colours.

The most remarkable event in the life of Tighermas, was his introduction of idolatrous worship into Ireland. He erected Pagan altars and began to

quity of this work is pretty evident, from hence that there does not remain the most remote tradition of it in the country; but it is more strongly demonstrable from a natural process which has taken place since its formation; for the sides and pillars were found covered with sparry incrustations, which the present workmen do not observe to be deposited in any definite portion of time."

Of our earliest colonists, the Damnii, or Danaans, it is said:—"The superior intelligence of this people, and of the Clanna Rhoboig, considered with Tacitus' account of the trade of Ireland, induce me to suppose that the coal works at Ballycastle, on the northern coast, which exhibit marks of ancient operations, had been worked by either or both."—*Wood's Inquiry into the Primitive Inhabitants of Ireland.*

establish his religion (which was the same as that set up by Zoroaster in Greece), about one hundred years after the Milesians had taken possession of the country. The idol which he set up was called Crom-Cruach.* It was a stone capped with gold. Twelve other rough stones were placed round it, to represent the signs of the Zodiac. The worshippers sacrificed the first-born of every creature to this idol on the day of Saman.

On this festival-day, Tighermas issued a peremptory order that these sacrifices should be made, and that men, women, and children should prostrate themselves on the ground in worshipping the idol, until they drew blood from their noses, foreheads, ears, and elbows. Many died in consequence of the severity of this exercise, and hence the place of worship was called Maghsleicht, which signifies place of slaughter. (*Vet. MSS., quoted in the Collection de Reb. Hibern. No. 12.*)

While Tighermas with many other idolators was in the act of worshipping, they were struck dead by some awful visitation from heaven. This however

* This frightful image, Crom-Cruach, was, it is said, destroyed by St. Patrick; in regard to which O'Flaherty says, "In commemoration of this memorable annihilation of idolatry, I believe the last Sunday in summer is by a solemn custom dedicated throughout Ireland, and commonly called Domnach Cromerach, that is the Sunday of Black Crom, I suppose on account of the horrid and deformed appearance of this diabolical spectre."—*Ogygia*, p. iii. c. 22.

St. Patrick, it is stated, attended the celebration of the Taltine Games, and preached to the multitude assembled on that occasion. After this he visited the Plain of Slaughter, in the county of Leitrim.

did not put a stop to those unholy rites which were practised by every people that conquered Ireland until the Christian religion triumphed over paganism.

Another record states that Tighermas was the first who adored idols and built altars in Ireland. At one of these in Breifne, in the county of Leitrim, he and many of his fellow-worshippers were struck dead by lightning from heaven. The place was afterwards called *Maigh Sleacht*, the plain of adoration.

The names of many places still retained, give evidence that there were, at one time, fire-worshippers in Ireland. Thus Baltinglass, or Bael-teinglass, means the pure fire of Bel or the sun, which is called the Great Father or the Great God.

At this place the chiefs sat in council; and within the entrenchments the nobles were stationed near the scene of debate.

Cahir, or Caer, in Gaelic, signifies oracle;* and the Irish word Grain, signifies the sun; from whence are the following names—Knox-greine, and Tuam-greine, hills of the sun; Cairne-grayney, the sun's heap, now called granny's bed; Grain-beacht, the sun's circle.

New Grange, near Drogheda, probably received its name from the same cause. Of this place Faber remarks, "The narrow passage, in fact, and the stone bowls of this Irish grotto are merely the counterpart of those in the cave of Trophimus, the pagodas of Hindostan, and the Pyramids of Egypt."

* Miss L. C. Beaufort. Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy.

There is also a Cromleach, or tomb-altar, near Cloyne, called Carig Croith, or the sun's rock.

Many monuments have been discovered, shewing that the heavenly bodies were worshipped by the ancient Irish. Golden ornaments have been dug up in the bogs, in the form of a crescent—such as were used in worshipping the moon, which was called Re-Slieve-mis, in Antrim, signifies mountains of the moon.

The Irish had also sacred groves and wells, the superstitious veneration for which has not yet passed away. Witness the blood-stained path round many of these holy wells, which on naked knees they traverse as a penance for sin. At all these wells the sacred tree is found, upon which each devotee leaves a piece of his or her torn-off garment, suspended on a branch, which must never be broken. It originated in an idolatrous custom, and now the people say it is a preservative from sorcery or witchcraft, which in olden times was attributed to the Tuatha de Danans, and to the Druids.

We are still told of the *Sidhe*, or fairies, inhabiting those old venerated trees, and “living among the pleasant hills;” and of the Ban-sidhe, or Banshee, which attends each Irish family “*of the real sort*,” to give notice of a death among their relations.

Baal, or Bel, was the chief deity of the Irish. Beel-saman was his title, which signifies Lord of Heaven. On the evening of the great festival day, called the day of Samhin, all who were condemned by the

Druids on the preceding March were burned, or purified between two fires.

The great tribunal of the Druids was held on the hill of Usneach, in Westmeath. The summit of this hill was the point at which the five provinces of Ireland met. Many of the farmers, in paying the May rent to their landlords, still denominate it Cios-na-Bealtinne, which signifies, the rent of Baal's fire.* There are few parts of the country in which you may not find those sloping stones, called Druids' altars and Cromleachs, originally called Bothal, the House of God.

One of the Irish kings named Tuathal, of whom you shall hear more hereafter, built the royal seat of Tlachtga, where the fire Tlachtga was appointed to be kindled. This fire was deemed sacred, and was employed to summon the priests, augurs, and druids of Ireland, to repair thither, and assemble upon the eve of All-saints, in order to consume the sacrifices that were offered to their pagan gods; and it was enacted under the penalty of a great fine, that no other fire should be kindled upon that night throughout the kingdom, in order that all the fires in the country might be derived from this sacred fire. To obtain this fire was esteemed a great privilege, for which every person who procured it paid a scraball, in value about three pence, every year to the king of Munster, as an acknowledgment that the piece of

* See Moore's History of Ireland.

ground on which the palace Tlachtga was built, had been taken from the province of Munster and added to Meath.

Tuathal, who was one of their most famous kings, after he had mounted the throne, established a new political constitution. He obtained a law for the exclusion of the other royal families from the throne, and engaged the nation, by solemn oath, to elect all their future monarchs out of his own race; and hoping to keep down the aristocratical spirit, he took tracts of land from each of the five provinces, and formed a sixth province, now called Meath. In his newly-erected province, all affairs of national importance were transacted under his own inspection. Every matter relative to religion was regulated at Tlachtga, in the county of East Meath. The remains of this sanctuary may still be traced near Drogheda, being the tumulus at New Grange, an account of which you will find in Beaufort's *Ancient Topography of Ireland*.

The convocation of Visneach was kept upon the first day of May, where they offered sacrifices to the principal deity of the island, whom they adored under the name of Beul. Two of these May-day fires were kindled in every territory in the kingdom, in honour of this pagan god. It was a solemn ceremony, at this time, to drive a number of cattle of every kind between these fires; which was supposed to be a preservative, or charm, against murrain and other pestilential distempers among cattle, for the following year. And from these fires, which were made in honour of the

god Beul, the day upon which the Christian festival of St. Philip and St. James is held, is called in the Irish language La Beultinne. This word is derived from *La*, which in Irish signifies a day; *Beul*, the name of the pagan god; and *Tinne*, which is the same with fire in English.

The vestiges of pagan worship can be easily traced in different parts of the kingdom. The unhewn pillars still standing, remain as monuments of the adoration of the sun. These, with the circle of upright stones, the sacred heaps or cairns, and the tomb-altars, called Cromleach, all originated with the Phenicians, together with the horrible rites or “burnt-offerings,” of human victims in which parents sacrificed even their children. The idolatrous Jews fell into this fearful abomination, as is described in Jeremiah vii. 31, 32. Well might they designate such a scene of horror, the “valley of slaughter and of shrieking.” It was also called Tophet, from the practice of beating drums, during the ceremony, to drown the cries of the children sacrificed in the fire to Moloch.

The worship of the heavenly bodies and the study of astronomy, were linked together. As the Irish derived the one from the Phenicians, the other followed in course.

Three annual festivals were observed by the Irish, each marking one of those quarters into which they divided the year. They began the year at the Vernal Equinox with the solemnities of La Baeltinne which was their great Fire Feast. The second quarter commenced at the Summer Solstice, which being the

“Season of Gaiety,” was commemorated by the celebration of the Taltine Games. The third quarter or Autumnal Equinox, commenced with those horrible sacrifices already described, in the “Field of Slaughter” or “Field of Howling.” The last quarter of the year was unmarked by any public celebration, but in that dark wintry season, fires were lighted up continually on all the high places.

Even yet, the Irish love to kindle the bonfire. The following account of the continuation of this pagan custom is graphically given in “Personal Recollections,” by Charlotte Elizabeth:—

“On that great festival of the peasantry, St. John’s Eve, it is the custom, at sunset on that evening, to kindle immense fires throughout the country, built like our bonfires, to a great height, the pile being composed of turf, bogwood, and such other combustibles as they can gather. The turf yields a steady, substantial body of fire, the bogwood a most brilliant flame; and the effect of these great beacons blazing on every hill, sending up volumes of smoke from every part of the horizon, is very remarkable. Early in the evening the peasants began to assemble, all habited in their best array, glowing with health, every countenance full of that sparkling animation and excess of enjoyment that characterise the enthusiastic people of the land. I had never seen any thing resembling it; and was exceedingly delighted with their handsome, intelligent, merry faces; the bold bearing of the men, and the playful, but really modest deportment of the maidens; the vivacity of the aged people, and the

wild glee of the children. The fire being kindled, a splendid blaze shot up; and for a while they stood contemplating it, with faces strangely disfigured by the peculiar light first emitted when the bogwood is thrown on. After a short pause, the ground was cleared in front of an old blind piper, the very *beau-ideal* of energy, drollery, and shrewdness, who, seated on a low chair, with a well-plenished jug within his reach, screwed his pipes to the liveliest tunes, and the endless jig began.

“But something was to follow that puzzled me not a little. When the fire burned for some hours, and got low, an indispensable part of the ceremony commenced. Every one present of the peasantry passed through it, and several children were thrown across the sparkling embers; while a wooden frame of some eight feet long, with a horse’s head fixed to one end, and a large white sheet thrown over it, concealing the wood and the man on whose head it was carried, made its appearance. This was greeted with loud shouts as the ‘white horse;’ and having been safely carried by the skill of its bearer several times through the fire with a bold leap, it pursued the people, who ran screaming and laughing in every direction. I asked what the horse was meant for, and was told it represented all cattle.

“Here was the old pagan worship of Baal, if not of Moloch too, carried on openly and universally in the heart of a nominally Christian country, and by millions professing the Christian name! I was confounded; for I did not then know that Popery is only a crafty adaptation of pagan idolatries to its own

scheme ; and while I looked upon the now wildly excited people, with their children and, in a figure, all their cattle passing again and again through the fire, I almost questioned in my own mind the lawfulness of the spectacle, considered in the light that the Bible must, even to the natural heart, exhibit it in to those who confess the true God."

The worship of fire and water was usually combined, and is partly retained among the lower order of unenlightened Romanists, as has been alluded to in their veneration of holy wells. A clergyman told the writer of a place in the south of Ireland where the women have a practice of what they call "swilling their children through the fire" to preserve them from evil. There are many passages in the Bible which reprobate these heathenish customs. "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch ; which I commanded them not ; neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination to cause Judah to sin." Jer. xxxii. 35 ; and xix. 5 ; vii. 31. Moloch was the idol of the Moabites, as recorded by Moses, Deut. xii. 31. And in 1 Kings xviii. 28, we have a description of the fanatical acts of his worshippers ; "They cried aloud and cut themselves after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."

The cromleach,* or fire-altar, is a huge stone sup-

* The Irish word *cromleach* is supposed by some to signify a crooked or bent stone ; and by others, the narrow unfrequented grave.

ported on three other stones ; a space left between them, for children, &c. to pass under the fire.

The curious caves already noticed, which are lined with flag-stones, sides, roof, and floor, have marks of fire still visible on them. Near to many of these, are pillar stones, called *whisperers*.

The common expression still in Irish among the lower classes, when going to mass is, "Let us go to the stone."*

The fire of St. Bridget, kept by nine virgins, may well be compared to that of Vesta, the goddess of the fire-worshippers. Without holy water blessed by the priest, no Irish cottage inhabited by Romanists would be deemed safe. Thus is the worship of fire and water still maintained in that religion which blends itself with paganism.

Veneration for old trees still prevails. Witness St. Bridget's monastery and the city of Kildare, originally Kildara, which means cell of the oak, from a very large oak-tree which grew near the spot ; the trunk remaining in the twelfth century. It was so much venerated, that no one dared to touch it with a knife.

The word *dair* signifies oak. This word is often combined with churches in Ireland.† Dairmagh, now

* Miss L. C. Beaufort's Essay in the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy.

† The first Christian missionaries, succeeding the Druids, consecrated the circuit of the grove anew to religion, and called it Doire, the meaning of which in Irish is the oak. Thus Columba, in the sixth century, founded two celebrated monasteries, one in the oaken grove in the town of Doire, afterwards corrupted to Derry ; the other at Doiremagh, the field of oaks, in the King's County.

called Durreogh, in the King's County, signifies the Plain of Oaks. Daire-Calgaich was the name of an ancient monastery, from whence Derry was named, and was once called the Hill of Oaks. Places such as these are thus referred to by the prophet:—"Then shall ye know that I am the Lord, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars. Upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols." Ezek. vi. 13.

Paxton, in his "Illustrations," thus refers to the Druids. He says—"The Druids held nothing more sacred than the oak, and the mistletoe which grows upon its arms. They chose groves of oak on their own account, and never performed any of their sacred rites without the leaves of those trees. In allusion to the religious worship which was paid to this tree, the prophet says,—'For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen.' Isaiah i. 20. They regarded the mistletoe, which grew on their favourite tree, as sent from heaven, and as a sign that God himself had chosen it for the scene of his worship. The mistletoe indeed is a very extraordinary plant, not to be cultivated in the earth, but always growing upon some tree. It seems to prefer the branches of the oak or the apple. It was ever treated by the Druids and their disciples with great ceremony. They called it 'the curer of all evil;' and having duly prepared their feasts and sacrifices under the tree, they bring

two white bulls, whose horns are then for the first time tied. The priest dressed in a white robe, ascends the tree, and with a golden pruning-hook, cuts off the mistletoe, which is received in a white sheet."

Serle, in his *Horæ Solitariae*, in a note on the Doctrine of the Trinity, says,—“The Gauls had many rites concerning their *oaks*, their Druids (i. e. oak-prophets or priests).* They worshipped the material sun or his light, as the great vivifier of nature, whence they were styled *Saronides*, &c.

“As to the *oak*, and their worship under it, this is evidently a vestige of the patriarchal religion, and refers to the *covenant* of God, which the *oak* was appointed to symbolize, but which the ancient heathens perverted, ‘changing the truth of God into a lie;’ for ‘when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.’ Rom. i. 21.

“The *oaks* (in our translation rendered *plains*) of Moreh and of Mamre, where Abraham pitched his tent and reared altars, were Bethels, or places of worship, where God met with, instructed, and revealed to him the promise of CHRIST, who should come of his flesh, and *for which purpose*, or *end*, Abraham kept whatever was implied in God’s *charge*, *commandments*, *statutes*, and *laws*, (Gen. xxvi. 5.) and which (being of the same name) may very justly be concluded to be similar in substance to those delivered afterwards more

* Their name is derived from the Celtic word, Deru, or Oak, the same as Drus in Greek.

expressly through Moses to the church of God. Hence we find, long before Moses, the usage of *minchas* or *rest-offerings*, *burnt-offerings*, *sacrifices*, and *drink-offerings*. Gen. iv. 3; viii. 20; xii. 7, 8; xv. 9; xxii. 2, 7, 8, 13; xxvi. 25; xxxi. 54; xxxv. 14.

“The perversion of this worship under the oaks, is spoken of in Isaiah ii. 12–15,—‘The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every tower, and upon every fenced wall.’ And again, ‘Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.’ Zech. xi. 2. In the margin, *the deferred forest.*”

CHAPTER III.

Ollamh Fodhla commences his reign—The College of Teamor—The Parliament of Teamhair—Royal Records—Psalter of Tara—Antiquaries—Laws of Hospitality—Military—Division of Ireland into five provinces—Intercourse with other nations beyond the seas—Enactment of Eochaidh—Knowledge of letters from the Phœnicians—Ancient Bethluisnon—Letters and arts introduced into Ireland by the Celts—Their origin described.

IN 3082, Ollamh Fodhla, a man of excellent knowledge and learning (as his name denotes) commenced his reign. He discovered great wisdom, and ruled with authority. He took a lively interest in the welfare of youth, for whom he introduced a new system of education ; and being himself a man of deep research, he was much esteemed, and acquired a great ascendancy over the minds of all the people. The polity of the nation was also in a manner new-modelled by him.

His great work was the erection of the college of Teamor. This he planned, regulated, and endowed ; and it afterwards became the model of several provincial schools, in which the arts, intellectual and military, were cultivated. He instituted good laws, and gained much celebrity by his written compositions, which comprehended a full history of his ancestors, their travels, adventures, and warlike achievements.

By Ollamh Fodhla the great council or parliament at Teamhair, now Tara, was instituted. Here the monarchs of Ireland kept their court; consequently it was the place of the greatest importance in the kingdom, and was the chief theatre of his exertions. He convened a general assembly of all the estates of the kingdom for the purpose of making laws, reforming abuses, revising antiquities, genealogies and chronicles, and also for consulting on measures for the restoration and preservation of peace among his subjects. Furthermore, he enacted that this meeting should be triennial, and held in the same place and time of the year (now called *All-saints*) according to the good pleasure of the reigning monarch from thenceforward. And that the members thus convened might assemble without fear of molestation, a law was passed, that whosoever should be found guilty of assaulting, wounding, robbing, or stealing from any member of that assembly during its sessions, should be punished with death.

Throughout the whole kingdom records were kept of every remarkable event that occurred in the several districts and families; and assemblies at set times were convened for the purpose of revising them, during the three years' interval between the meetings of the general convocation at Tara. At these assemblies all were brought in and submitted to the strictest scrutiny; and if any attempt at forgery was discovered, the entire record was condemned to the flames. All such records as were deemed authentic were written in the monarch's book of royal records, which

was called, the Psalter of Tara; and any thing not found in it was thought unworthy of credit. In this manner did the Milesians preserve a record of their antiquities in those early times; and several copies of these valuable documents were transcribed and preserved in separate depositories, wherever they were deemed secure. This method was pursued with increased zeal and exactness until long after St. Patrick's first coming among them.

The Irish, from the time they possessed a fixed government, took a peculiar pleasure and pride in preserving every memorial connected with their genealogies and history. In early times, it is said that every great lord had his own peculiar *sept* of annalists and historians to transmit to posterity the deeds which especially concerned himself and family, besides such as concerned the nation at large. All, however, underwent inspection at the triennial assembly, and received their sentence according to their merits or demerits.

It is also said, that independent of these private antiquaries, there were above two hundred chief annalists and historians maintained by the nation, having estates made over to them and their children after them, in order that their minds should be unburthened with private cares, while their sole attention was directed to the all-important research to which they had been appointed.

As well as his private antiquary, each lord or chieftain, had in his train a physician, a poet, and harp-player, to whom lands were assigned to secure to them

and theirs an independence, that no secular occupation might interrupt the services required of them. During times of intestine commotion these men were particularly guarded from molestation.

At the demise of the antiquary, physician, poet, or harp-player, his eldest son did not inherit his office, unless he was found the most worthy of the sept or family. The individual among the relatives of the deceased best fitted to fill his place, was always appointed, by which means great emulation was kept up among the several branches of the family, and thus did the kingdom arrive at that extensive knowledge to which few nations attained ; a fact which has been sufficiently attested by foreign as well as domestic historians.

During the reign of Ollamh Fodhla a law was instituted that none but those of noble blood should be raised to the high dignity of antiquary, physician, poet, harp-player and entertainer.

This last office requires some explanation. Be it remembered that in those early times no Inn on the long and dreary road opened its accommodating door to refresh the weary traveller ; neither was there found money in the purse to remunerate such services as were required. In order, therefore, that they might be rendered gratuitously, public entertainers were appointed, and to obtain this dignity the following qualifications were required :—

1. He must be lord proprietor of seven townlands, each containing seven plow-lands of Irish measure. 2. He must have seven ploughs at work.

3. He must have seven herds of cows, each herd consisting of one hundred and forty full. 4. His mansion house must be so situated as to be accessible by four different entrances. 5. A hog, a sheep, and a beef must at all times be ready prepared that whoever came in might be fed without delay. As soon as one set of these animals were served up another set were placed on the fires.

All ranks of persons in their degree were entertained according to a prescribed rule. Any person who defrauded or injured aught belonging to his entertainers was rigorously fined. This hospitality of the Irish was unparalleled in all Europe, as the most authentic authors have stated.

In military law the Milesians are said to have excelled other nations in forming their armies for battle with the utmost order and advantage. The private soldiers marched against the enemy hand in hand, each rank four or eight feet deep according to their numbers and the ground they occupied. They were never to yield an inch of ground under the penalty of certain death, and were always bound to move forward, if not countermanded by the commanding officer.

To each party there were leaders, and a commander-in-chief was placed over the whole army. The commanders and under officers had their various coat-of-arms blazoned upon their banners, in order that they might be distinguished in battle by their several antiquaries, who attended for the purpose of entering upon the family record all their warlike achievements.

3940. During this year there was a fourth division

of Ireland. By order of Eochaidh, the reigning monarch, the kingdom was divided into five provinces. The place where they met was called Uisneach, in Westmeath. A large stone was set up to mark the spot.

We read in various histories of Ireland that each province had always a peculiar intercourse with the nation next to it beyond the seas. The people of Leinster with France; Ulster with Spain; Munster which was divided into two provinces, with England; and Connaught with Scotland and Wales. It is supposed that with these nations they had constant dealing and intercourse.

By an enactment of Eochaidh, lords or kings were appointed to rule over each province, chosen out of the most ancient and chief family which inhabited it; all being tributary to the reigning monarch. The chief of each noble family in Ireland was styled King—that being the only title in use among the Irish to distinguish the nobility from the inferior gentry, until the English introduced the titles of Earl, Viscount, Baron, &c. &c.

The details given by many historians of the celebrated council of Tara, serves to corroborate the general assertion, that Ireland was in former times a much more enlightened nation than we are at present inclined to believe. It is well known that the ancient Irish had a secret mode of writing, such as was used for sacred purposes among the hierarchies of the east. Their materials we are told were tablets formed of beech-wood, upon which they wrote with an iron pencil or stylus. The letters were called Feadha, or woods.

It is with much probability conjectured that they acquired their knowledge of letters from the Phenicians; and from the same source proceeded their creed, their ritual, the names of their gods and festivals, their sacred hills and promontories, &c.

Astle, an eminent antiquarian, says that "as they had commercial intercourse with their neighbours the Phenicians, they probably had the knowledge of letters."

The most diligent inquirers into the antiquities of Ireland say, that "the European or Celto Scythians divers times sent colonies into Ireland:" and it is well known that the Scythian language is one of the most ancient, and found to be the same as the Irish language.

"In those parts of Spain with which the Irish were most acquainted, the Phenicians had from the time of Moses established themselves; and accordingly letters are known to have flourished in those regions before the Romans were even in existence, as Romans themselves have acknowledged. Yet to Rome the introduction of letters into Ireland has been attributed: there were however monuments of stone, inscribed before the arrival of St. Patrick. This interesting discovery was made by the same learned antiquary quoted above. It has been falsely asserted by some writers that the Romans visited and even conquered Ireland." There is not the least trace or record of any communication between Ireland and Rome in the early annals.

"It follows therefore, that as there was no prototype to copy the Irish alphabets from, they must be original."*

* Harrison Ware.

This was their own ancient Bethluisnon, from which they could not be prevailed upon to depart, though they were induced to attempt those rude imitations of the Roman characters which their present alphabet exhibits, and which the Saxons afterwards copied from them.

As far as we can trace, the oldest inhabitants are descended from the most humane and learned nation of all the old Celts, by whom the knowledge of letters and the arts were early introduced into Ireland ; where they were cultivated undisturbed by foreign interference or ambition through a long succession of ages. Their philosophical researches rendered them a wise people ; their religion, partly that of nature, and partly deduced from the clearest fountains of the old patriarchal worship, influencing their manners, rendered them a benevolent people.

The Irish never were at any period of time the savages that Mr. Hume represents them to have been. It has been truly said, that “ their barbarism in later ages was owing to a civil state, the worst that can possibly exist ; but the force of manners did in some degree remedy the evil ; nor were they greater barbarians than some of their neighbour nations.”

The authentic history of Ireland is dated from the building of the palace of Emania by King Kimboath. Its site was near the city of Armagh ; and the princes of Ulster held their court at this splendid palace. From the period of its erection they were called the kings of Emania. It was the residence of the Red Branch, celebrated, in the songs of the bards and sen-

nachies or antiquarians, for their feats in a war of seven years' duration between Connaught and Ulster. One of these far-famed heroes, named Cunchullin, received the order of knighthood when only seven years old ; for at this time, in Ireland, it was no uncommon occurrence to confer the order of knighthood at this early age.

We close this chapter with the following extracts from Paxton's Illustrations regarding the ancient Celtæ, which may prove interesting to some of our readers :—

“ The Spanish nation claims the honour of being descended from Tubal ; it being considered that their country was known to the ancient Greeks by the name of Iberia to distinguish it from Asiatic Iberia, designated Celtiberia.

“ Germany was peopled by the descendants of Gomer the eldest son of Japhet. They spread into ancient Gaul, of which they were the aboriginal inhabitants. Their posterity received from the Greeks the name of Galatae, by contraction Keltae, the Celtæ of the Latins, and the Celts of modern times. That the Gauls or Celtæ were Cimerians or descendants of Gomer is attested by Appian in the clearest terms. The Celtæ or Gauls were otherwise called Cimbri, and Plutarch asserts that the Cimbriari were called Gallo Scythians.

“ Magog is generally reckoned the father of the Scythians that occupied those countries on the east and north-east shores of the Euxine ; for Pliny assures us that Scythopolis and Hierapolis, which those

Scythians took when they conquered Syria, were ever afterwards called Magog. Ptolemy grants that the proper name of Hierapolis was Magog. This fact is confirmed by Josephus, who says that the Scythians were called Magog by the Greeks, and from that circumstance infers their lineal descent from Magog the son of Japhet.

“From the opposite shores of ancient Gaul the Gomeraens or Cimbri passed over into Britain, for it cannot be doubted that the British Isles were peopled from the nearest points of the neighbouring coast. In Wales names are continued which prove it. The inhabitants of Cumberland also retain the name of their progenitor; they were at first called Cimbri, and afterwards Cambri; and Cumberland is itself the land of the Cumbri, Cimbri or Gomeraens.

“But the Welch and the inhabitants of Cumberland are not the only descendants of Gomer in the British Isles. It is well known that the Saxons, and especially the Angles, were neighbours to the Cimbri; and if it be admitted that Germany was peopled by the sons of Gomer, then the German tribes, the Saxons and Angles, who drove back the ancient Britons into the mountains of Wales, are branches from the same root, equally descended from the eldest son of Japhet.”*

* The sons of Japhet were Gomer and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

CHAPTER IV.

Reign of Eochadh—Ugaine More's reign, 3586—Division of the kingdom among his children—Reign of the cruel Cobhthach—His death—Maion his successor—2993. Silver shields and targets—3233. Chariots introduced into Ireland—Brazen swords, &c.—Origin of heraldry—Ancient state of agriculture in Ireland.

IN 3394 Eochadh reigned. This monarch was surnamed Vairceas, which signifies an open skiff or boat. He was the first who used a kind of boat called Curragh made of wattles and covered over with raw hides, which afterwards were much used in Ireland; and are still employed in many parts of the country. One of the old Irish chroniclers from whom we receive this information, has added, that "this prince was banished two years before he came to the throne, but with a number of his followers he kept the sea in several vessels, from which he often landed his men to spoil the inhabitants in these kind of boats. They are mentioned as a sort of miracle by Festus Avienus describing the Oestrymindes or Isles of Scilly." (*De oris Maritimis*).

Lucan describes in the following lines the mode of constructing these boats:—

“ Cæsar the champion leaves, and spreading ground,
When Sicorean waves his troops surround ;
The twisting willows to the keel he joins,
And reeking hides cements, and close the lines.
Proud of their crew they waft them to the shore,
Such Venice knows, such Britons had before,
And such as river Nile to Memphis bore.”

From Cæsar's own description of this passage in his Commentaries, it appears that he had learned the method of making these boats from the Britons, for he says, “ when things were brought to such extremities, and all the ways were guarded and shut up by the soldiers and horsemen of Afranius, Cæsar ordered the soldiers to make such boats as he had seen used in Britain formerly, the keels whereof were made of light stuff and small timber, and the upper parts formed of osiers and covered with hides.”

3586. Ugaine More began to reign. His surname *More*, i. e. Great or Large, was given him as descriptive of his power and possessions. Most of the western islands of Europe were tributary to him. He allied himself with France by marrying Ceasair, the daughter of the king. He had a large family consisting of twenty-two sons and three daughters. The young men passed their time in revelry and excesses. They formed military bands with which they marched through the country, and by their rapacity and exactions they impoverished the unresisting inhabitants. The complaints, which were poured in from every part against them, caused their father to convene a council. But his sons with their military forces had become so

formidable, that Ugaine was compelled to make a division of the kingdom among his children. By the regulations which were adopted at this division of the country into twenty-five parts, the public taxes and revenues of Ireland were collected by the kings for the space of 300 years after the reign of Ugaine.

Two of his sons only are mentioned as the children of Ceasair, Laoghaire and Cobhthach. After the death of his father the first of these claimed the sovereignty, which he obtained by fighting for it. His father had been murdered, and he became the avenger of blood having himself slain the murderer. But he also had an adversary in his own brother Cobhthach, although he endeavoured to conciliate him by many acts of kindness, having on his accession to the throne settled on him a princely revenue.

Cobhthach was not however satisfied ; for envy had taken possession of his breast, and like a canker worm preyed upon his vitals. He either feigned or felt a pining sickness which wasted his form and excited the commiseration of his brother who knew not the cause, and therefore he fell into the snare that was prepared for him. Cobhthach coveted the crown, and resolving to possess himself of it, he artfully contrived to induce his brother to visit him unattended in his sick chamber, and concealing a dagger under his bed clothes, he took advantage of an unguarded moment to plunge it into the heart of the king.

Not thinking the crown sufficiently secure to him by the death of Laoghaire, the cruel Cobhthach destroyed all the princes of the blood, whom he suspected

might interfere with him in the possession of it ; and deeds of barbarity are recorded of him too disgusting for this brief history. In reading it, let my young readers remember that these men were heathens who knew not the laws nor the commandments of the true God. The light of the everlasting gospel had never dawned upon their benighted minds ; they worshipped they knew not what : the prince of darkness led them captive at his will. They were in that state described in the 44th chapter of Isaiah 13-20,—“ They cut down the trees which their own hands had planted ; with part they kindled their fire and warmed themselves and roasted their food, while with another part they made gods and fell down and worshipped them.”

The subsequent history of Cobhthach verifies the declaration of Scripture, “ There is no peace saith my God to the wicked.” This envious king had no peace, although in possession of all he longed for. A fire was kindled in his bosom which many waters could not quench, and he became like a walking shadow ; from hence his surname is derived, for the Irish word *caol* signifies *lean*. Yet he dragged on a miserable existence, more detested by his subjects than any of his predecessors. Some say he reigned thirty years, others say fifty, and that at length by violent hands they were delivered from his tyranny.

His successor was Maion the grandson of Laoghair Lork. How he escaped the murderous weapons of Cobhthach Caolmbreag is not narrated. In his childhood he experienced the most cruel treatment from his unnatural relatives. By some means or other

he made his way to his kinsman the king of France, in whose court he grew up to manhood, and was well spoken of. The fame of his exploits in a foreign land having reached the ears of the daughter of the king of Munster, she formed a plan to recall him to Ireland, in order that he might rid the country of its hated tyrant, and claim for himself the lawful possession of the crown. To effect this she composed verses, in which she described the heroic deeds already achieved by Maion, and afterwards those that awaited him in his native land where every heart was open to receive him, and to which every voice invited him. The princess then called Craftine her musician, to whose care she committed her verses, with directions that he should attune them to his voice, subjoining thereto the melody of his harp. Well instructed in all she designed, she sent Craftine to the court of France, where he soon met with Maion, and introduced himself by singing some of the most attractive of his well-known native strains accompanied with his harp. These touches having had the desired effect on the mind of the young Irish prince, the musician changed his song to that which he had recently learned, and then indeed the feelings of the prince could not be restrained. He was no longer a listener but an actor. The king of France entered at once into his views, and ordered two thousand of his choicest troops to attend Maion to Ireland. With these he landed in the harbour of Wexford, and came upon Cobhthach by surprise, and put him and his retinue to the sword at Didhion Riogh, where at that time he

kept his court. Thus did the old envious usurper finish his wretched career ; and without the slightest opposition, Maion occupied his place.

Being seated on the throne, Maion received from a Druid a new name expressive of his character, Labhradh Loingseach, which signifies to speak, because his actions spoke more than his words. By this name he is always designated in Irish history. After he was settled in the peaceable possession of the kingdom, his first care was to find out and make proposals of marriage to the noble-minded princess who had composed the verses which had induced him to undertake and accomplish all that they suggested—the wresting of the crown from the usurper.

Accompanied by her musician Craftine, who had become his chief favourite, he repaired to Munster, attended by a princely retinue, and was most graciously received by the king of that province, and also by his fair daughter. Soon afterwards the marriage was solemnized, and the king of Ireland was happy in sharing his crown with a princess so truly worthy of it.

In the year 2993 we read of silver shields and targets, and in the following century helmets, the neck and fore-pieces of gold ; and also of golden chains given to distinguished warriors.* These were intro-

* Numerous curious and costly ornaments of the purest gold and silver, elaborately wrought, have been dug up in fields and bogs, where they must have lain for ages. Golden instruments, without alloy have also been found, and are supposed to have been used in religious ceremonies.

duced by order of Muineamhon who was a descendant of Heberus Fiônn.

In 3233, chariots were first introduced into Ireland by a king named Rothacaigh. In several of the Irish histories we find it stated that many of the champions went out to battle in chariots drawn by two horses.

Seadna Fiônn of the posterity of Heberus Fiônn, was the monarch, it is said, who first paid the soldiery according to their several ranks and offices; and he enacted military laws which in after ages were observed by the Milesians. Many swords and warlike weapons made of a mixed metal, chiefly copper, have been discovered, admitting of a very high polish, and capable of being tempered to receive a sharp edge.

“What makes these brazen swords such a valuable remnant to the Irish antiquarian is, they serve to corroborate the opinion, that the Phenicians once had a footing in this kingdom.”*

“One circumstance as to the swords seems to be decisive: they are as exactly and as minutely, to every apparent mark, the same with the swords of Sir W. Hamilton’s collection now in the British Museum, as if they came out of the same armoury. The former found in the field of Canæ are said to be Carthaginian; these therefore, by parity of reasoning, may likewise be said to have been of the same people.”†

“Those among them who study ornament,” ob-

* Campbell’s Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland.

† Governor Pownal’s account of some Irish Antiquities to the Society of Antiquarians, 1774.

serves Solinus in speaking of the warlike weapons of the ancient Irish, “are in the habit of adorning the hilts of their swords with the teeth of sea animals, which they burnish to the whiteness of ivory ; for the chief glory of these people lies in their arms.”

The origin of heraldry is undoubtedly very remote. Sylvester O’Halloran, Esq., M.R.I.A., says, “I think it at least coeval with military institutions, and that it has preceded those of chivalry.” He gives the following as the result of his researches :—

“In the course of my reading I have met with no history that marks the ancient splendour of heraldry so strongly as the Irish. A college of heralds was a part of the literary foundations of Amerghin the Irish priest, president of the literati, and brother to Heber and Heremon, first monarchs of Ireland of the Milesian line. The rank and dignity of families through the kingdom were ascertained ; each knew its particular station.*

“From the foundation of the Milesian monarchy, to the arrival of Henry II., including a period of 2430 years, but a single instance occurs of usurpation ; and this which happened in the first century and lasted for but five years, not of a Milesian, but a Belgian prince.

* The Milesians after the conquest of Ireland had no other change or device in their banners but the dead serpent and the rod of Moses, in imitation of the Gadeliens ; but when the triennial assembly was instituted, it was there enacted that the chief men should have a particular coat of arms according to their peculiar merits, whereby they might be known to their antiquaries and other learned men, wherever they appeared, in foreign countries, or at home ; in peace, or in war.

Hence, as the antiquarian was necessary to preserve the genealogy, the herald was equally so to mark out the rank and station of the chief ; and this was the *only* use heraldry was converted to here. Even at this day there is not an antiquarian in the kingdom that cannot ascertain the rank and dignity of early families. The business of the senachie or antiquarian was to preserve the pedigree of families only ; whilst that of the Bolsaire or herald was to blazon their arms and determine their ranks.

“ The ancient parliament, like the modern, met about the beginning of winter. Notice was given and *rescripts* sent to the different estates, to their tributaries the Picts and North-British Scots, as well as to those parts of Armoric Gaul under their dominion. The morning of the day of meeting was announced by blasts of trumpets and musical instruments ; when the esquires of the principal chiefs presented themselves at the grand entrance of Moidh-Cuarta (the house of assembly), and delivered to the crown-marshal the arms of their respective princes, which he handed over to the monarch’s herald, who fixed them over the seats in the exact order in which they were to be placed.

“ At a reasonable interval a second charge gave notice to the target-bearers of the crown-general, the military, and the servants of the biatachs, keepers of houses of hospitality, and of the representatives of cities and towns, to present the arms of their principals, which were also arranged according to the egrees of presidency. And at the third sound of

instruments, the chiefs proceeded in exact order, each seating himself under the canopy of his shield. The monarch and provincial kings soon after entered, and were seated thus:—the monarch's throne was more elevated than the rest, and placed in the middle of the hall, to be more conspicuous; the king of Leinster at a respectful distance fronted him; the king of Munster was placed on his left hand, the Ultonian on his right, and the king of Connaught behind. This arrangement was observed to the reign of Roderick O'Connor.

“The crest of Ireland as used by our own princes in tilts and tournaments on the continent, and after them by some of the Henrys and Edwards, was a bleeding hind wounded by an arrow under the arch of an old castle. The bleeding hart under the arch of an old castle as the crest of Ireland, alluded to their great hunting matches which continued for many weeks, in the seasons, with regular encampments; and which custom is still kept up in many places, particularly in Connaught. Many relations of these hunting matches still exist; and part of the arms of O'Donoghoe of Loch-lene, or Killarney, (always noted for this sport), are two foxes.”

The antiquarians and historians of Ireland were the fileas whose office we have already described. We subjoin however the following additional facts respecting their duties from O'Halloran:—

“The talents of these fileas were not altogether limited to matters of national concern; they were equally studious of privately instructing and improv-

ing their patrons, in order to sublime their virtues to a height worthy of that eloquence wherein they were to be recorded.

“For this purpose they made curious researches into history and memoir ; they collected all the written and traditionary accounts of the exploits, &c., and adventures of the Irish ancestry. These they digested into the natural order ; they dignified them by sentiment, varied by fancy, and harmonised by verse ; and when the business of the day was over, and the prince or chief with his noble visitants, his officers and household were seated, the flea rose in the midst. His rising claimed attention still as night. He began his narration in a low voice, he gently insinuated into the hearts of his hearers, now melted them into tears, and now compelled them to break upon himself with exclamation ; again he tempered with violence, and again he rose upon the passions, till, by seeming transported himself, his audience are truly transported,—the youth are scarce restrained from flying to arms, and the ancient are renewed in the vigour of their former days.

“Thus were the hours of modern gaming and profligacy turned into an entertainment, of all others the most wisely and artfully calculated to render a nation social, generous, valiant and humane, emulous to the glory of their ancestors, and enamoured of every virtue.”*

* Extracts from a “Preface Dedicatory to the Most Noble and Illustrious the several Descendants of the *Milesian* line. Signed Henry Brooke.

The following account of the ancient state of agriculture in Ireland may prove interesting to some of our readers :—

“ The state of society was inimical to the art of cultivation. It consisted of small communities in which the landed property was constantly sub-divided among the descendants of the proprietors by the laws of gavel-kind, thus rendering the possession of individuals small and inadequate to subsistence in a series of ages. Besides, the landed proprietors however small their inheritance might be, being by profession warriors and by descent gentlemen, considered it beneath their rank and dignity either to cultivate the ground or apply themselves to the arts of civil life. Agriculture, therefore, as all other branches of husbandry, was committed to the management of slaves, or to a class of men little better than slaves. The chiefs and great lords who had considerable extent of landed property cultivated it by their vassals, denominated *fuiders*, in the Irish Brehon laws, after the manner of feudal tenures.

“ But those who by the division of property had small possessions, and in consequence not able to maintain a number of vassals, were obliged to set their land to professional men, who had emerged from a state of vassalage by obtaining their freedom. These, among the ancient Irish, consisted of two classes—herdsmen and agriculturists. The former were by the Irish denominated *jarfine*, and the latter *deirfine*.* The *deirfine* or agriculturists were divided

* Brehon Laws, Collect. Reb. Hib. No. 10.

into *fine*, that is, tribes or families, distinguished by the name of *ban*. Each *ban*, *fine*, or family, consisted of fathers, brothers, sons, cousins, &c. The senior or principal person of the elder branch being their *flath* or chief, who commanded or regulated the business of the others. In the spring, such a tribe of agriculturists took a plot of ground according to their number, from one or more proprietors, who all had their separate property distinguished by stones, if pertaining to more than one. These plots were denominated the *coar*, and were immediately inclosed by a ditch or hedge of dry stakes or brush-wood, and for which the tribe generally paid half the produce;* a custom which is still practised sometimes in the kingdom, and is evidently the origin of the French *metayeres*. If the *coar* was virgin ground, it was pared and burned, the only method these rude farmers had of manuring, and afterwards ploughed with light ploughs drawn by three or four horses abreast, by their tails, and led by a person before them backwards. The ploughing finished, the seed was sown, being constantly buck or red wheat, called by them *brec*, a species of grain admirably adapted to their method of cultivation, who had no notion of winter corn, nor indeed could they well have it in their barbarous state of society.

“ During the growth of the crop, the tribes erected their huts adjoining to the field, in a kind of inclosure

* Sir Henry Pier's History of West Meath, Brehon Laws, Young's Tour in France; also the information of an intelligent farmer.

called a *ban*, and lots were cast for the ridges appertaining to each individual. Harvest being reaped and tribute paid, which as before observed generally amounted to half the produce, the tribe or *ban* retired with the remainder to some wood, where they dwelt in wattled houses or subterraneous caverns until return of spring. The corn intended for seed was flashed out of the straw, but the rest burnt with it so as not to scorch the grain, and this before taken out of the field.*

“ On the return of spring the coar which had lain waste during the winter, was re-cultivated for the second crop. This was done by burning the weeds and stubble of last year’s growth, and ploughing in the ashes, on which was sown barley, which finished their succession of crops; for red wheat was either sown again next year, or the land suffered to lie waste for two or three years, and new coars were taken. For it doth not appear that the Irish farmers during the middle ages were acquainted with any other grain than brec and barley, and fallows were absolutely unknown to them, farther than letting their fields lie under weeds for two or three years.†

“ The cultivation used by the chiefs on their domains and at the monasteries was similar to this, though perhaps more regular.

* Brehon Laws, Acts of Parliament against burning in straw.

† From information of old people, who said this method was practised within the beginning of the present century.

CHAPTER V.

Reign of Eochadh Aireamh—Interment of the dead, 3952—
Birth of the Redeemer, 4004—Reign of Criomthan the
Great, A.D. 27—Insurrection of the Attacots—Cairbre de-
posed and Elim placed on the throne—Plebeians overcome
by the Milesians—Tuathal the Acceptable—Pride of the
Milesians—Celebrated Fair of Tailtean—Sports—Institution
of a law called *Aoineirie*—Tradition of Tuathal's daughters
—Boromean tribute—Feidhlim the Legislator—Conn of the
Hundred Battles—Boundary line—Possession of the Desii,
A.D. 164—Cormac MacArt—Island of Eubonia—Palace at
Tara—Fionn MacCumhall—Bog of Allen.

WE read of a remarkable event which occurred during the reign of Eochadh. He was the first person who caused the interment of a dead body, and hence he received the surname of *Aireamh*, which signifies *the Grave*. Before this time the Scythian custom of burial prevailed, with one essential difference—the Milesians placed the body on the surface of the ground and laid over it a heap of earth and stones, but never inhumed the living with the dead as the Scythians did, who buried the nearest relative with the deceased. According to the order and enactment of Eochadh a more seemly interment of the body was adopted. A grave was dug three feet deep in the ground, seven feet

in length, and the body being placed therein on the back, a flat stone was laid over it, on which the name of the deceased was inscribed.

It is necessary to remind our readers that we make no attempt at a connected train of historical facts. Mere sketches and gleanings are all we can promise. We must, therefore, from a paucity of interesting details, pass from the times of paganism to the birth of our Lord, when “the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” Matt. iv. 16.

This glorious event, it is stated, took place during the reign of Criomthan the Great, who filled the throne for sixty years, “the longest, the happiest, best administered reign in the whole Irish history.”

Our Lord and Saviour, according to Archbishop Ussher’s chronology, was born in the year of the world 4004, in the 55th year of the reign of Criomthan, king of Ireland. At this time we are informed by Tacitus, that “the ports and landings in Ireland were better known than those of Britain, from the much greater commerce that was carried on by the merchants to the former.”

In A.D. 27, Fiachad was king of Ireland. During his reign there was an insurrection of the Plebeians, who were generally called Attacots, a name corrupted from the compound Irish term Attachtuatha, which simply denotes the Plebeians, or as some say, *the Giant race*. They were a mixed people, descendants of the Tuatha de Danans, and of the soldiers and servants whom the Milesians originally brought from

Spain. The lives of the former were spared by the conquerors for the purpose of employing them in cultivating the ground, and thus they became bondmen. In process of time their numbers increased, as also their wealth, which rendered them formidable to their masters, especially as a spirit of insubordination prevailed among them. At length it rose to such a height, that they resolved to free themselves from the trammels of their proud Milesian lords.

The fomentor and leader of this factious race was named Cairbre, and surnamed Cat's-head. He had travelled throughout the land sowing the seeds of discord, and easily persuaded the people to adopt the measures which he proposed, in order to rid themselves of the government which they deemed tyrannical. He collected many followers, whom he invited to a place of general rendezvous. This was his own dwelling-place in Connaught, where he prepared a magnificent entertainment, and invited all the chief men in the kingdom. The monarch, princes and nobles, unsuspecting of treachery, accepted the invitation, and while seated round the convivial board were suddenly surprised and attacked by numerous assailants, who slaughtered without mercy their defenceless victims. Amongst the slain on this occasion were the monarch, the kings of Munster and Ulster, and all the chief nobility. On the following day Cairbre collected his followers and marched to Tarah, where he was proclaimed king.

When the sad tidings reached the ears of Eithne the queen, she fled, accompanied by the two other

widowed princesses and all their children, to her father the king of Scotland. Here they remained in safety during the reign of the usurper. It was a time of much suffering in Ireland: sterility and famine wasted the country and swept away thousands. The Plebeians were alarmed into a belief that the vengeance of the God of nature was pursuing them because of their crime; and being taught to expect further misery if they did not restore the Milesian race to the sovereignty, they deposed Cairbre and placed Elim on the throne.

Elim was lineally descended from Ir, a monarch chosen by themselves; yet they would not be at peace. They devastated the land, and deluged it with the blood of the Milesians, whose possessions they seized. Hitherto they had carried all before them; their greater numbers having intimidated the Milesians. The time however came when these were roused to action. A brave Milesian prince, Fiacha Casain, convened his brother chieftains, and consulted with them on the most efficient and prompt means of deliverance from the arrogant enemy. They mustered their forces, and formed their plans with decision and judgment. In several engagements with the Plebeians, they overcame and slew very many. Tidings of their defeat having been conveyed to the son of the murdered monarch, who had been carefully educated by Eithne his mother at the court of his grandfather the king of Albain, he at once formed the resolution of appearing in person to fight the battle and assert his right. This was the famous monarch Tuathal already

referred to, who afterwards received the surname of "Acceptable," because of his prowess, and the time of his arrival, when his presence was so much desired.

In A.D. 79 he landed with a strong escort in the west of Connaught, from whence he despatched messengers throughout the kingdom, to give notice of his arrival, and to invite around his standard all who were disposed to help him. His summons was obeyed with such extraordinary zeal and despatch, that with a strong army he was enabled to march towards Tarah, and a battle was fought at Aichle in Meath, in which Elim and 8000 Plebeians were slain. The victory was decisive, and Tuathal was proclaimed king at Tarah. From henceforward he gave no quarter to the Plebeians, whose total extirpation compelled the Milesians afterwards to perform those servile labours themselves, which these slaves had heretofore done for them. They cultivated their fields and applied themselves to mechanical arts, labouring and learning with such diligence, perseverance, and ingenuity, that they soon excelled their former workmen, and made rapid improvements.

To this extirpation of the Plebeians, it is attributed that the Irish trace their genealogies to the sons of Milesius only, or from Ludghadh, the son of Ith. They are too proud to believe that they could have sprung from these spurious, degraded slaves, whose genealogy no antiquary ever recorded.

Among the names found in the noble genealogical list, are Moor, in Irish O'Mordha, in the Queen's County; O'Conchobhair, that is O'Connor, in Kerry;

O'Loghlin, &c. O'Farril was a princely family of Longford. Magranuille, that is Renolds, O'Shenley, O'Rody. The most renowned families in Ulster were MacMahon and MacGuire. The Earl of Antrim is descended from Colla Uais, to whom the entire province of Ulster belonged in the year of our Lord 320. These names are recorded by the Irish chroniclers and historians as having sprung from some noble septs of the Milesians.

After twenty-five years of warfare, Tuathal succeeded in restoring the blood royal to their respective provincial territories, and the gentry to their estates. As a reward for such signal services, he required from each of the provinces a certain portion of land round about Uisneach. This central ground was called Meath, that is Midhe, or Mir, which signifies a part, and comprehends the counties of East and West Meath. The provincial kings surrendered it willingly, in token of their love and gratitude to Tuathal for delivering them from the cruelty and thralldom of the Plebeians, and it was assigned over for ever to the monarchs of Ireland, as board-land to the house of Tarah.

Tuathal erected the palace at Tailtean, at which place a celebrated fair was kept in the month of August, and was called in the Irish language La Lughnasa, in the English Lammas-day. To this fair the inhabitants of the island were accustomed to bring their children to contract them in marriage. The strictest and most becoming order was observed in this meeting. The men were placed by themselves,

the women also by themselves at a considerable distance ; and after their parents had treated about their marriage, and agreed upon the articles, the ceremony took place.

The king of Ulster laid claim to a tribute of an ounce of silver from every couple who were contracted and married at that fair, because of the field, on which it was held being separated from the province of Ulster. It was called Tailtean in honour of a queen whose name was Tailte, the daughter of Maghmor, king of Spain.

“The Tailtean sports have been much celebrated by the Irish historians. They were a sort of warlike exercises, not unlike the Olympic games, consisting of fencing, tilts, and tournaments, or something resembling them, and other exercises. They were held every year at Tailtean, a mountain in Meath, for fifteen days before and fifteen days after the first of August. Their first institution is ascribed to Lughaidh Lamhfadha, the twelfth king of Ireland, who began his reign A.M. 2764. In gratitude to the memory of Tailte, the daughter of Maghmor, a prince of some part of Spain, who having been married to Eoegan king of Ireland, took this Lughaidh under her protection, and had the care of his education during his minority, both the sports and the place where they were celebrated, took their name from this lady.”*

In addition to the royal palace of Tlachtga, of

* Sir James Ware's Antiquities. This place is still called Tilton, and is part of the estate of Mr. Garnet, near Navan.

which you have already heard, Tuathal built a royal residence in each of the provinces, in which he held counsels or assemblies at stated periods of the year, and laid down certain rules and laws to be observed. He enacted a law, by the Irish called *Aoineirie*, supposed to be similar to that which the Romans called *Lex talionis*. The substance of it was, that when any offender was convicted of a misdemeanour, he was to pay an equivalent in quantity or quality. If he repeated the offence twice or thrice, and was convicted, he received the sentence of death without mercy.

Tuathal governed with such wisdom and justice, by a strict adherence to the laws, that peace and tranquillity were established throughout the kingdom. In his reign there was a general review and revision of all the annals, histories, and ancient records, according to the triennial scrutiny instituted by Ollamh Fodhla, which, on account of the insurrection of the Plebeians, and the usurpation and tyranny which followed, had been neglected for many years.

There is an interesting tradition concerning the family of Tuathal. He had two daughters, virtuous and beautiful. Achy, the king of Leinster, saw and admired them both. Having obtained the eldest in marriage, he took her to his own court; but he was not content—he wished for her sister also, and contrived a stratagem to obtain her.

The following year he invented a tale of woe, describing the fatal illness and death of his queen. Overwhelmed with grief, he appeared at Tarah, and

acted his part so well as to excite the sympathy of Tuathal and his remaining daughter. By degrees he evinced his regard for the latter, whom he persuaded to supply the place of her sister. Shortly after the arrival of the new queen at Leinster, her sister whom she supposed to be dead, suddenly appeared before her, and the effect caused her instant death. The first queen survived her sister but a short time, and the same grave received both.

The work of revenge was determined on by Tuathal. He marched with an army into Leinster and laid the country waste ; but on the submission of the nobility he desisted, and accepted from them the following *boroime* or tribute, viz.—600 cows, 600 sheep, 600 hogs, 600 mantles, 600 ounces of silver, 600 tons of iron yearly, which subsidy was levied for nearly 600 years afterwards, and was called the Boromean tribute, which is thus described by an old poet:—

“ TO TUATHAL, AND THE MONARCHS AFTER
HIM.

“ Three-score hundred of the fattest cows,
And three-score hundred of the purest silver,
And three-score hundred mantles, richly woven,
And three-score hundred of the fattest hogs,
And three-score hundred of the largest sheep,
And three-score hundred cauldrons, strong and polished.

“ This tribute of Leinster was paid by forty monarchs, from Tuathal to Fianaetha.”

Before money was coined, the Irish bartered their commodities.

The king of Connaught received, as a tribute, a horse and arms for every lord of a manor.

Tuathal was slain by Mail who succeeded him ; but an account of his reign would not be interesting to our readers.

Feidhlim ascended the throne about the middle of the second century. He was surnamed the Legislator on account of the wise laws which he enacted.

He revived the ancient law of retaliation, which was a means of reforming the morals of his subjects ; as a dread of the retribution required, guarded them from defrauding or injuring their neighbours. After a reign of nine years, Feidhlim, unlike most of his predecessors, was suffered to die a natural death.

Conn, the hero of the hundred battles, received his surname from having fought many successfully with the chiefs of the provinces, in levying the Boro-mean tribute. In one of these he defeated Eugenius, the chieftain of Munster, who fled to Spain, where he formed an alliance with Heber the king of Castile, whose daughter Beara he married. Being furnished with troops by his father-in-law, he returned to Ireland, and not only regained that which he had lost, but compelled his adversary to divide the kingdom with him. This decisive battle was fought at Bearnan-eile, now called Devil's Bit, in the county of Tipperary. By mutual agreement a boundary line was drawn to divide their kingdoms from *Aitheliath Mheadhruidhe*, now Clarin's Bridge, south of Galway, to Dublin. This line was called Eisgiriada, i. e. the long bounds. The ruins of the Eisgir are still traced.

The south division was called Leath Mogha, or Mogha's half. The north division was named Leath Cuinn, or Conn's half; and to this day these divisions are so called. Eugenius was celebrated all over the kingdom for prowess, enterprize, and indefatigable exertion, which procured for him the surname of Mogha Nuaghat, i. e. the strong labourer. He won the hearts of the people by supplying their wants during a time of famine, when provisions failed throughout the land for man and beast.

Permanent peace was not established by the division of the kingdom. Ambitious and turbulent minds are not easily satisfied. The rival monarchs were again engaged in contests, and a fatal battle was fought at Maigh Lena, in Connaught. Many of the Irish and their Spanish allies were slain, among whom was Fraoch, the brother-in-law of Eugenius. The confused records of those early times state that Mogha Nuaghat was treacherously slain by Conn on the morning of the day of battle, in his bed. And of Conn himself it is said, that he met with an untimely end, from an assassin's vindictive hand, in his own territory at Tara.

Eugenius left three children, a son and two daughters, of whom Beara, the Spanish princess, was the mother. The name of the first was Oilioll Ollum, from whom sprung the nobility of Ulster, and many distinguished families in Leinster and Connaught.

Conn, the monarch of Ireland, left six children. Two of his sons were slain in battle; one survived, named Art, who succeeded him, and was surnamed

The Melancholy Art. We shall however pass over the uninteresting record of his reign, which lasted thirty years. Oilíoll Ollum married Sadhbh, the sister of Art. He had a numerous family; and had seven sons slain in battle. Of these, one named Eugenius was the most beloved and promising. He was valiant, magnanimous, and generous. After having married and become the father of a family, he was cut off in battle in the flower of his days. He left two sons, Eogan and Cormac Cas, to whom their grandfather, Oilíoll Ollum, bequeathed his kingdom of Munster, which was divided into two principalities, north and south Munster. The latter, called the kingdom of Desmond, was the possession of Eogan, and comprehended the present counties of Waterford, Cork, and Kerry. The people of this kingdom were called the Eoganarths, or Eugenians.

Cormac Cas had north Munster, called the kingdom of Thomond, which included the counties of Clare, Limerick, and the country round Cashel as far as the mountains of Sliablama, in Ossory. His descendants were called Dalgais, or Dalcassians. It was decreed that these two clans should alternately give a sovereign to reign over the whole province.

The Irish clan, denominated Desii, possessed a large tract of country near Tarah, in Meath, which was called Desie-Temragh. They were a powerful clan; the descendants of Fiachadh Suidhe, eldest son to Fedlimid the lawgiver, who was supreme monarch of Ireland from the year of our Lord 164 to 174. By the death of his eldest son, which took place

before his own death, the crown reverted to the posterity of his youngest brother, Cormac Mac Art, although the former left issue, by whom this exclusion was resented. Aongas, or Eneas, the grandson of Fiachadh Suidhe, under pretence of some injury offered him by the reigning monarch, raised a body of forces, broke into the palace of Tarah, slew Kellach, or Ceallach, the king's son, and thrust his spear into the eye of the king.

Cormac quelled this rebellion in seven successful battles, and drove Eneas with two of his brothers, and others of the Desie, his adherents, into Munster, where either by concession or force of arms, they possessed themselves of that tract of country which extended from the river Suire to the South Sea, and from Lismore to Credanhead, comprehending nearly the whole of the county Waterford. From this time Desie in Meath, and Desie in Munster, were called North and South Desie. The latter also in Irish bore the name of Nan-Desie.*

Cormac, the son of Art, was the most accomplished of all the Milesian princes. He was the most en-

* St. Declan sprung from this family, and preached Christianity to the people in the year 402, before St. Patrick came to Ireland as a missionary.

About 1167, the sept of the Desie took up the surname of O'Feolain, and retained it in their families till after they were conquered by the English.

By a decree of Brian Boroime, family surnames were first given, and handed down to posterity with the particle [h], or the monosyllable [va] prefixed, which was afterwards changed into the vowel [O], as O'Brien, O'Conner, O'Neil, O'Feolan, &c.

lightened legislator, the best general, and the most learned scholar, as historians assert, of any who had preceded him. He founded and endowed three academies at Tara; the first for teaching the science of war; the second for historical literature; and the third for the cultivation of jurisprudence.

These institutions were founded with such munificence, and on such a solid basis, that they outlived himself, which was a rare instance in those early times. He reformed many abuses connected with literature, and caused a general revision of the annals of the kingdom and the national records, which had been regularly kept in the Psalter of Tara since the days of the renowned Ollamh.

At this time the Isle of Man belonged to the Irish, and was called the Island of Eubonia. Cormac having had some contention with the people of Ulster, defeated them, and banished the offenders to this island, which is marked by Ptolemy as a place belonging to Ireland.

Cormac ascended the throne of Ireland about the middle of the third century. His pursuits were learned and peaceable. He composed volumes of laws for his subjects, and he enforced such as were found good for his state. His hospitality and liberality are said to have exceeded that of his predecessors.

He added to the royal house at Tara a capacious palace. It is said, that at and around his table in the great hall of Tara, there were generally 1100 persons. The hall was said to have been 300 feet long,

30 cubits high, 50 broad, and had 14 doors opening into it. No less than 150 cups of gold and silver decked his table.

An old Irish fragment translated by General Vallancey gives the following account of the palace of Tara :—" In the reign of Cormac the palace of Tara, was nine hundred feet square. The diameter of the surrounding rath seven dice or casts of a dart ; it contained one hundred and fifty apartments, one hundred and fifty dormitories, or sleeping rooms for guards, and sixty men in each. The height was twenty-seven cubits. There were one hundred and fifty common drinking-horns, twelve doors, and one thousand guests daily, besides princes, orators, and men of science ; engravers of gold and silver, carvers, modellers, and nobles."

The banqueting hall is thus described :—" Twelve stalls or divisions in each wing ; sixteen attendants on each side, and two to each table ; one hundred guests in all."

Cormac Mac Art was esteemed Ireland's best king during the time of paganism. He composed several books in prose and verse. He versified the Psalter of Tara, lest the antiquities written in prose might be corrupted. In this composition he gives an account of all the nobility in Ireland ; their origin and affinity to each other ; the limits and bounds of all the provinces ; the rents and dues to be paid by his vassals to each provincial king, and the rents to the landed proprietors from their own tenants. But the most renowned of his works was entitled " The Institution

of a Prince," with advice to his son Cairbre, to whom he resigned his throne, which he abdicated "in the full vigour of his age and faculties," in accordance with an ancient law of Ireland, which prohibited a monarch to reign who had received any personal blemish ; he having, as has been already related, lost an eye while endeavouring to quell a rebellious attack on his palace.

General Vallancy found a narration of this event in an old Irish law-book, of which he gave, in substance, the following translation :—" The monarch's kinsman, Ceallach Mac Cormac, having carried away by force the niece of another Irish chieftain, the latter, determined to take revenge for the insult, hurried to Tara, the royal residence where the offender was then a guest." The MS. states, " He made directly towards Tara, where he arrived after sunset. Now there was a law prohibiting any person from coming armed into Tara after sunset ; so he went unarmed, and taking down Cormac's spear from the place where it hung in the hall of Tara, he killed Ceallach Mac Cormac on the spot, and drawing back the spear with great force, the ferrule struck out Cormac's eye, and wounded the Rectaire, or Judge of Tara, in the back, of which he died."*

Cormac, although a pagan, had, it is supposed, entertained a belief in the First Great Cause, in opposition to the religion of the Druids.† In attempting

* Fragment of the Brehon Laws.

† There was an ancient institution at Tara of sacred virgins, or Druidesses. Their place of abode was called, " The Retreat

to substitute the more rational belief of a Supreme Being, by whom all things subsist, for their polytheism, he stirred up against him that powerful priesthood, which excited different provinces to rebellion.

Having quelled these in various battles, he retired to a lowly thatched cabin at Aicill, or Kells, near the Boyne, where he devoted the remainder of his life to contemplation and philosophic researches. The death of Cormac is clouded in mystery. It is said that he was strangled, and buried near the river Boyne, at a place called Ros-na-riogh. Some of his works survived him so long as the seventeenth century, and even still an imperfect copy of some of his laws is to be found in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. Cormac had several children. Keating gives a romantic narrative of their mother, the beautiful and virtuous Eithne.

His son Cairbre, who succeeded him, reigned twenty-seven years. He received the surname of Liffeachair, because he was nursed near the banks of the river Liffey, in Leinster. One of his sisters named Graine, married Fionn Mac Cumhall, the celebrated Irish general, who established the militia called Fiana Eirionn, or Trained Bands. It consisted of seven battalions, 21,000 men; and on occasions of war at home, or when troops were required to be sent

until Death." This place was attacked by the king of Leinster, and the whole of its inmates inhumanly slaughtered. Gealcassa's Mount in Innishowen, county Donegal, was so called from a female Druid, whose name it was. Her grave and her temple were on this hill. She was called the "White-legged."

abroad, it was raised to nine battalions. The commander of this army was a wise and warlike man—the most famous champion of his time; but no giant, as some fabulous legends represent him to have been. He was not overgrown in stature, nor of foreign blood, but a true Irishman by birth and descent. He and his warriors were held in such high estimation by the provincial kings and nobles, that they kept them in constant pay for the security of their coasts from foreign invasion, and also for maintaining the tranquillity of the country from internal marauders.

A soldier was not enlisted without the following requisitions:—He must have sufficient activity to leap over a tree as high as his forehead, and stoop under another as low as his knees. He must never turn his back upon nine men of another nation, never insult a woman, and generously assist the weak and poor in the land. A poetical genius was also a strong recommendation. Subsistence was allowed for the soldiers only during the winter. In summer they were encamped in the fields and lived by hunting and fishing. Marks of their fires can still be traced throughout the country.

During the space of seven hundred years the champions of Ulster were renowned for valour and strength in all the western parts of Europe. They had three houses in Ulster. We find the following notice of one of these houses:—

“Eamhain, the most important, was that in which the kings of Ulster kept their court, and was accounted one of the noblest mansions in all Ireland

for hospitality and greatness, which is said to have been kept up for the space of 900 years; that is to say, from the days of its first foundress, Macha Mongruadh (the only woman of the Milesian race who reigned in Ireland), until the time of Feargus Fogha, the last provincial king of the posterity of Ir."

The second house was that in which the champions lodged their arms and the trophies of victory which they had obtained in foreign countries. It was called Teaghna craibhe rhuadh, The Red Branch.

The third house was termed Broinbheargh, which signifies, The Sorrowful Lodging, being a kind of hospital for the sick and wounded. The champions of the Red Branch were deemed in their time the most valiant and powerful heroes in the western world.

During the reign of Cairbre a famous battle was fought between the two champions, Fin Mac Cumhal and Goll, about the right of precedence at Almhain, the residence of the former. It was "situated in Leinster, the summit of Allan, or rather, as the natives of that country pronounce it, Allowerin. The village and bog of Allen have thence derived their name. There are still the remains of some trenches on the top of the hill, where Fin Mac Cumhal and his Fians were wont to celebrate their feasts."*

* Dr. Young's Trans. Irish Acad.

CHAPTER VI.

Christianity in Ireland—Origin of the Church of England—Gospel preached by St. Paul, A.D. 68—British Church established by him—Aristobulus appointed bishop—Linus first bishop at Rome—The Church of Britain refused to be under subjection to the Pope—First Protestant Church—Tertulian proves the existence of the Christian religion in Ireland in A.D. 200—Purity of the doctrine—Irenæus finds fault with the schismatics at Rome—Irish Church independent of the See of Rome—St. Patrick brought to Ireland by Niall “of the nine hostages”—Albain called Scotia—The Hy-Niall race—St. Patrick sold to an Irish chief—Learns the native language—His early piety—His escape from servitude—Palladius sent to the Irish Churches by Celestin, bishop of Rome in 431—St. Patrick returned to Ireland in 433—The purity of his Christian doctrine—Archbishop Ussher’s statement—Progress of religion in Ireland—The ancient Irish differed from the Romish Church in the festival of Easter, &c.

WE now enter upon a very interesting period of our history—the introduction of Christianity into England and Ireland. Who the first missionaries were, or in what precise year they came to our island, so far as we have been able to discover, has never yet been ascertained; but that the religion of the Gospel was at first propagated in England, unadulterated and unmixed with Popery, is now clearly established by

satisfactory and abundant authorities. As regards the very early introduction of the Gospel, may we not conclude that the proximity of the two countries led to their receiving the same doctrines nearly at the same time?

Gildas is the most ancient author who has written on the early state of the English church (*De Eacid Brittanorum*), and from him we are led to believe, that about the year 37 A.D., the news of Redemption was brought to England. This author says, that "in the latter end of the reign of Tiberius," emperor of Rome, Christianity was introduced. And Cardinal Baronius, in his annals alleges, that the Gospel was first preached in Britain in A.D. 35.

Origen, who wrote about A.D. 234, says—"The power of God our Saviour is even with them which in Britain are divided from our world." Tertullian in the same century speaks of "places of the British Isles, inaccessible to Romans, but which had become subject to the dominion of Christ."

St. Paul preached the Gospel in Britain about the 14th year of the reign of the Emperor Nero, A.D. 68. It is affirmed by some, that he appointed the first bishop, and established a complete Episcopal form of church government in Britain before there was one in Rome; for it was after his return to that city from Britain, that Peter and Paul, by joint authority, in the year of their martyrdoms appointed Linus the first bishop of Rome. The name of Aristobulus, the first bishop of the church in Britain, is found in the Epistle to the Romans; and this church continued to be

governed by its own bishops for six hundred years independent of any foreign ecclesiastical authority. Britain had a learned clergy, flourishing schools and churches, and for many centuries utterly refused subjection to the Pope or his emissaries. In this state were they found when Austin, the Pope's first missionary, arrived.

Nine hundred years before Luther's time, the British church strongly protested against the errors of the Church of Rome. This was the first Protestant church in the world. Pure and simple in their worship, the British Christians would hold no communion with the Church of Rome, and would not even sit at the same table nor lodge under the same roof with the followers of Austin on account of their superstitious and idolatrous ceremonies. All these facts may be found in a letter from the late pious and learned Bishop Burgess, addressed to the clergy of his diocese (St. David's), entitled, "An Inquiry into the Origin of the Christian Church, and particularly of the Church in Britain."

There is proof of the early introduction of Christianity into Ireland, and also that its purest doctrines were preached to the people. The writings of Tertullian render it obvious that this was the case previous to the year A.D. 200.

A poem is supposed to have been written in A.D. 220, by Olioll Olum, king of Munster, which demonstrates the author's acquaintance with the existence of the Christian religion. That it was not then defiled or loaded with the superstitions of Popery, may be

seen from writings still extant. Gaius or Caius, who died A.D. 296, says that "the righteousness of the saints avails nothing to our pardon or justification." Some writers affirm, that about the year of our Lord 254, Cormac, king of Ireland, was converted to Christianity several years before his death.

It has been the opinion of many that the Irish church received monastic rules and Christianity itself from missionaries taught by St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, the pupil of Polycarp of Smyrna, who obtained them from St. Ignatius, the immediate disciple of St. John.

In the second century, St. Irenæus complains "that the Schismatics at Rome had corrupted the sincere law of the church, which led to the greatest impieties. These opinions the Presbyters, who lived before our times, who were also disciples of the apostles, did in nowise deliver. I, who saw and heard the blessed Polycarp, am able to protest, in the presence of God, that if that apostolic Presbyter had heard of these things, he would have stopped his ears, and cried out, according to his custom, 'Good God, for what times hast thou reserved me, that I should have suffered such things!'"—*Euseb.* lib. v. c. 20.

"That the early church of Ireland was independent of the See of Rome is founded on those traces of connexion, through Greek and Asiatic missionaries, with the East, which *there is no doubt* are to be found in the records and transactions of that period."—*Ib.*

The words of Gennadius are as follow :—"Placuit

nempe altissimo, ut S. Athanasius, ex Egypto pulsus ab Arianis, vitam monasticam, usque ad id tempus in occidente ignominiosam ; Scotis, Attacottis, aliisque barbaris Romanum imperium vastantibus ; SS. Ambrosio et Martino opem ferentibus ; propalaret, ann. circ. 336." Let this passage be translated in what manner it may, it affords us an authority for connecting the Scots or Irish with Christianity, in the year 336.

Genadius says that Celestius, "while yet a youth, before he had adopted the Pelagian doctrines, in the year 369, addressed three letters to his parents in Ireland, in the form of little books, full of such piety as to make them necessary to all who love God."

Many in wilful ignorance, assert that St. Patrick was the first missionary who preached the Gospel in Ireland. But he makes no such assertions : for when speaking of remote districts which he visited, where no Christian missionary had preceded him, he says,— "I went every where to promote your cause, even to remote districts, where no one had ever arrived who could baptize, or ordain clergy, or complete the people."

When quite a youth, St. Patrick was brought to Ireland by the army of Niell "of the Nine Hostages," thus surnamed from five provinces in Ireland, and four in Scotland and the Isles of Britain, which delivered hostages to Niell. He carried his victorious arms throughout Albain and Britain, which he rendered tributary. With a reinforcement of Irish, Picts, and Britons, he crossed the sea to France, and landed in

a part of the country then called *Armorica*. He conquered all before him to the Loire, where, being encamped, he was slain. His army returned with great booty, and brought home his body, which was interred at Connaught.

In his time, Albain was first called Scotia. Buchanan, quoting Orosius, says, "The inhabitants of Ireland are called Scots from the beginning, as our own annals relate."

Capgravius, in his history of Columcille, or Columba, says, "Ireland was formerly called Scotia, from whence came the generation of the Scots now inhabiting Albain, next to Britain, and this Albain is now called Scotia or Scotland accidentally from Ireland, from whence they are descended."

"The great O'Niell of the Nine Hostages" left eight sons, to whom, and to their descendants, he bequeathed all his hereditary possessions, which were perpetuated to them. With but one exception, for more than five hundred years, the monarchs of Ireland were chosen from the Hy-Niall race. Different territories were assigned respectively to the eight sons—four in Meath and four in Ulster, the inhabitants of which in succeeding times were formed into great clans, and were the cause of much dissension in the country. These were denominated the North Hy-Niells and the South Hy-Niells.

It is said that the army of Niell brought with them out of France two hundred prisoners, among whom was St. Patrick, of whose parents we have no certain knowledge. His birth-place, it is believed, was Scot-

land. Ware and Ussher fix the time in the year 373, and the spot, Ussher says, was Kil-Patrick, i.e. Church of Patrick, which took its name from that circumstance.

At sixteen he was carried away captive, and sold to a chief named Milcho, whose residence was near the mountain of Slieve Mis, in the county of Antrim, which place is now called Slemish, parish of Rathcavan. During the six years of his youth which he spent in this place, he made himself master of the Irish language. In his *Confession* he says, "My constant business was to feed the flocks. I was frequent in prayer; the love and fear of God more and more inflamed my heart; my faith was enlarged, and my love augmented; so that I said a hundred prayers by day, and almost as many by night. I arose before day to my prayers, in the rain, in the snow, in the frost; nor was I affected with slothfulness, for then the Spirit of God was warm within me."

After his six years' servitude, St. Patrick escaped from Milcho, and with great difficulty made his way to his parents, with whom he spent two years in Gaul. Thirty-five years he continued abroad, pursuing his studies incessantly, until the death of his maternal uncle, the Bishop of Tours, whose name was Martin, under whom he studied, and by him he was ordained a deacon. After the demise of his grand-uncle, St. Patrick renewed his studies under Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, by whom he was ordained priest.

Palladius preceded him to Ireland, being sent to the Irish churches by Celestin, Bishop of Rome, in 431.

The Irish are spoken of by Prosper, in his notice of the mission of Palladius, as “the Scots believing in Christ.” But though some were Christians before the coming of St. Patrick, or even Palladius, (for St. Kieran, St. Ailbe, St. Declan, and St. Ibar, according to the statement of Ussher, had introduced and planted the religion of Christ in this island before their time), still the paganism of the Danes prevailed to a great extent in Ireland, and Pelagianism tainted the blessed truth in many places where it had been received. Palladius being ignorant of the Irish language, could do little, and therefore soon left Ireland and went to Scotland, where he died.*

St. Patrick was sixty-one when he returned to Ireland; and as Benignus, one of his biographers, states, he brought with him many learned and devout Irishmen, whom he met on his travels on his way thither.

St. Patrick may be deemed the chief, though not the first missionary to Ireland. His letter to Coroticus and his Confession are received as “authentic works from his hand.” “The great purity of the Christian doctrine that pervades them, the holy breath of prayer that forms the atmosphere of the Confession, and the frequent reference to the sole authority of Scripture that is to be found in them all, convince us that they are genuine.” “All the pieces contained in the small book of *Opuscula* of St. Patrick are genuine, except the forgery of after times, that which is

* Ulster Churchman.

called his Charter to the Abbey of Glastonbury, to which it is said St. Patrick retired to spend his latter days. In Mac Geoghegan's History, we are told that he had a disciple who took his name. This person is said to have retired to the Abbey of Glastonbury, where he died. From hence may have arisen the mistake of the charter.

It is remarkable that the venerable Bede, one of the most accredited historians of the Roman Catholic church, passes over in silence the apostolic labours of St. Patrick, though his history was written within sixty-seven years of the period in which they are recorded; and this circumstance is the reason why many modern writers suppose his whole history to be fabulous. But there are reasons sufficient to believe that such a person did exist, and chiefly laboured in the north of Ireland, where he spent his last days, and where he also died. There is no doubt that the religion which he propagated was drawn from the Scriptures of Divine truth; and therefore the good seed sown by him took root, grew, and prospered.

It is certainly the fact, that the great standard of faith referred to by the early Irish Christians was the Bible itself. "It is written," appears to have been most especially the rule of St. Patrick, in his Confession; and even in the genuine Canons of his Synods. Jocelin, his principal biographer, says that he exercised himself much in reading the Scriptures "from the very earliest age of manhood." Secundinus, his nephew, in a poem written in his praise, describes him as "a true and eminent cultivator of the evangelical

field, whose seeds appear to have been the gospels of Christ." "Sacrum invenit thesaurum sacro in volumine,"—"He found the sacred treasure in the holy volume."

The effect of his preaching was the extension among the people of the precepts of the Gospel, which the Saint himself mentions as the effectual means of bringing them under the law to Christ. See his Opusc. p. 92, and the many conversions, of which we are informed by a purer tradition than that which records the monstrous legends of latter days, he was the instrument in the Lord's hands of accomplishing in this land.

In his Epistle to Coroticus, and in his Confession, St. Patrick writes thus :—"I was a stone which lies in the deep mire ; and he who is mighty came and took me out of it in his mercy ; and he indeed raised me up, and placed me on the top of the wall." Again he says, "But what shall I say or what shall I promise unto my Lord ? because I see nothing that he has not bestowed on me." "*I am greatly* a debtor to God who has vouchsafed to me so much grace, that so many people should be born again unto God through me." "These are not my words, but those of God and the apostles, and the prophets that have never lied,—‘He who believeth shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.’" "Behold I now commend my soul to my most faithful God, whose ambassador I am, in my great unworthiness." Again he says, "I am unworthy to assist God or man."*

* Opusc. pp. 5, 14, 21, 28, 30.

The accredited works of St. Patrick exhibit him in a most striking manner as a man of continual prayer. One hundred times a-day (a definite for an indefinite number) did he address himself to his God, as he tells us in his Confession ;* before the dawn, in the snow, and frost, and rain, he ceased not, because his spirit burned within him to pour out his supplications. Yet throughout all these works, thus replete with accounts of prayers and intercessions, not one passage anywhere occurs in which the least mention is made of the invocation of the Virgin Mary, or of any created saint or being whatsoever. He mentions no other Mediator or Intercessor than the Lord Jesus ; and in concluding the relation of the dream which induced him to visit the west of Ireland, he says, “ The Lord our Advocate prays for us.”

St. Patrick and the early Irish Christians had no idea of any thing like a purgatory, or purgatorial fire, which doctrine is neither primitive nor scriptural. In a work of St. Patrick, “ *De tribus Habitantis*,” “ The three Habitations,” he says, “ There be three habitations under the power of Almighty God ; the first, the lowermost, and the middle : the highest whereof is the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of the heavens ; the lowermost is hell ; the middle is named the present world.” Again : “ In this world there is a mixture of good and bad ; but in the kingdom of God none are bad, but all good ; but in hell none are good, but all bad ; and either place is sup-

* Opusc. p. 6

plied from the middle." Of the soul he says, "Neither can the archangel lead it to life, until the Lord have judged it; nor the devil transport it to hell, until the Lord have condemned it."

Hanmer, in his *Chronicles*, thus describes St. Patrick's labours:—"St. Patrick's manner was, first to catechise, secondly to baptize, lastly to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's supper. When with the aid of the country he built churches, he would not name them after any saint's name, but *Domnach*, the church of the Lord. The only doctrine Patrick read and expounded to the people was the four Evangelists, compared with the Old Testament."

From Archbishop Ussher's statement we are authorized to believe, that the primitive saints of Ireland, among whom are the acknowledged missionaries of Rome, received the truths of the gospel as enlightened Protestants now receive them, and "on most of the leading points of Christian doctrine, professed the opinions at present entertained by Protestants."

Archbishop Ussher also makes the following candid confession respecting St. Patrick, "This I will say, that as it is most likely that St. Patrick had a special regard unto the Church of Rome, from whence he was sent for the conversion of the island; so if I myself had lived in his daies, for the resolution of a doubtful question, I should as willingly have listened to the judgment of the Church of Rome, as to the determination of any church in the whole world, so reverend an estimation have I of the integritie of that church, as it stood in those good daies. But that St. Patrick

was of opinion that the church of Rome was sure, ever afterwards, to continue in that good estate, and that there was a perpetual privilege annexed unto that See, that it should never err in judgment, or that the Pope's sentences were always to be held infallible oracles, that I will never believe. *Sure I am that my countrymen after him were of farre other beliefe,* who were so farre from submitting themselves in this sort to whatsoever should proceed from the See of Rome, that *they oftentimes stood out against it, when they had little cause so to doe."*

Historians differ in regard to the period of time given to St. Patrick to fulfil his missionary labours in Ireland. Some say he died in the year 465; others that he lived to the great age of 120. Probably the last account included the years of his disciple who took his name, and with whose history his own is often confounded.

An intimate friendship is supposed to have subsisted between St. Patrick and St. Bridgid, who is said to have woven his shroud at his own request. She was, however, but a child of twelve years old at the time of his death. Her life, as Ussher informs us, was written by Cogitus. She was the foundress and *Abbatte* of the monastery of Kildare. It is said, that she "with her maidens and widows used to resort to the church of Kildare, that they might enjoy the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." One of the miracles of St. Bridgid is reported, even in the latter legends, to have been performed when she was about to drink out of the chalice, at the time of her receiving of the eucharist.

St. Patrick died at Armagh, and was buried at Downpatrick, where also lie the remains of Columcille and St. Bridgid.

At this period religion made rapid progress in Ireland. Many of its monarchs and great men became devoted servants of Christ, giving their time, their riches, and talents to that service which is perfect freedom. Thus they turned from the bondage of the world, and rising above all earthly glory, they chose more certain, solid, and enduring treasure, even that which is indestructibly laid up in heaven.

Abbé M'Geoghegan, in his *Hist. d'Irlande*, says,—
“*Usserius, après un ancien MS. authentique, distingue trois différentes classes de saints dans l'Irlande, qui correspondent aux cinquième et sixièmes siècles,*” “the first order was most holy, the second holier, the third holy. The first glows as the sun, the second as the moon, the third as the stars.” The first continued from St. Patrick, A.D. 431, during four reigns to 515 or 542. The second during four more reigns to 558. The third for four also, to about the year 600.

Nothing like the supremacy now acknowledged by the Roman Catholics was attributed to Rome by the Irish church for two centuries after the arrival of St. Patrick. “It was not till the beginning of the eighth century that the title of Archbishop was known in Ireland.” “The greatest of the Irish saints and the northern part of the island united with the monks of Iona in adhering, quite in opposition to Rome, to the ancient mode of celebrating Easter.”

Bede's account of the synod of Whitby relates that

the arguments made use of by the Irish clergy at that meeting were the practice of St. Columbkille and his successors, traditionally continued from St. John the apostle, no reference to St. Patrick or St. Peter being made. The Irish church at that early period refers not to the supremacy of St. Peter to strengthen her arguments.

“The ancient Irish differed from the Romish church respecting the festival of Easter, and some other points, which were discussed before a synod or council assembled at Whitby, in Yorkshire, before the king Oswin. The arguments were temperate and learnedly brought forward by St. Colman” (a monk of the Columbian order, who had been sent thither to fill the high office of bishop), “with his Irish clergy, speaking in defence of the old observances of the country; while Wilfred, a learned priest, who had been recently at Rome, undertook to prove the truth and universality of the Roman method. St. Colman, in his argument says, “This Easter, which I use to observe, I received from my elders, who sent me bishop hither; which all my fathers, men beloved of God, are known to have celebrated in the same manner. It is the same which the blessed Evangelist St. John, the disciple specially beloved of the Lord, *with all the churches that he did oversee*, is read to have celebrated.”

“Can it be believed that such men as our venerable father Columba, and his successors, would have thought or acted things contrary to the precepts of the sacred pages.”

CHAPTER VII.

Record left by St. Chrysostom, A.D. 407—Bede's assertion in regard to Britain—Ireland spoken of as a place for studying the Scriptures—British princes sent thither—Called "the Country of Saints"—Jonas's testimony to its ecclesiastical independence—Enjoyment of Christian doctrine, and its influence on their faith—Bede's testimony to their character—Ancient Erin the Island of Missions—Bible read by all in the native tongue—Colomba, the first missionary, planted the banner of the cross upon the banks of Lough Foyle—His birth and parentage—His zeal in preaching the Gospel—Monastery of Derry founded by him—He translates portions of the New Testament—A copy of the Evangelists in his hand-writing—Called "The Dove of the Churches"—He re-visits the scene of his early labours, A.D. 550—Sailed for Iona, A.D. 563—The Druids expelled by Columbkille—He founded a monastery at Iona—The Culdees—King Oswald converted to Christianity while an exile in Iona—No images admitted—Rapid progress of Christianity—Missionaries from Iona—The Bible the Culdee's only standard of truth—Interesting ruins in the little island of Iona—Colomba's return to his native country—Expulsion of the poets—Free Schools appointed—Colomba's farewell lines on quitting his abode on the banks of Lough Foyle—His death and burial in 597.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM, who died in the year 407, left the following record respecting the prevalence of pure Christianity in Ireland at that early period:—

“Although thou shouldest go to the ocean, and those British isles,” &c. “thou shouldest hear all men every where discoursing matters out of the Scriptures, with another voice, indeed, but not with another faith.” We have a still more decisive statement of Bede* in regard to Britain. “This island at this present, with five sundry languages, to the number of the five books of Moses, doth study and set forth the knowledge of the perfect truth—that is, with the language of the English, the Britons, the Scots (or Irish), the Picts, and the Latins, which by the study of the Scriptures is made common to all the rest.”

Bede mentions St. Kilian and St. Fursa, who, “from the time of their *very childhood*,” applied themselves to the study of the Scriptures, and tells us also of St. Hilda, Abbess of Lindisfarne, that “such religious men as lived under government, she made them bestow their time in the reading of the Scriptures.” And he states also, that so high was the character of Ireland as a place for “the studying of the Scriptures,” that Agibert, a native of France, came here and remained for some time for that sole purpose. British princes were also sent here to obtain this best of learning. Altfrid became thus most learned in the Scriptures, “*Successit Eyfrido in regnum.*” Northumbriæ, “*Altfrid, vir in Scripturas doctissimus.*” Bed. iv. 26.

* Bede was born at Yarrow in Northumberland, A.D. 673, and died there 735. In 731 the most valuable of his works was written—the Ecclesiastical History of the Saxons, which contains an authentic account of the state of the Church in England from the earliest period.

Again, he relates of St. Aidan, St. Columbkille's principal successor, that "all such as went with him, *whether clergy or laity*, were obliged to exercise themselves in reading the Scriptures, or in the learning of the psalms;" and also, that "the people flocked anxiously on the Lord's day to St. Aidan, and St. Finan, and St. Colman, to the churches and monasteries, not for the feeding of their bodies, but for the hearing of the word of God."

Therefore was this island called "Sanctorum patria," the Country of Saints. In the ancient rude poetry of the day, Erin is thus mentioned,—

"Ivit ad Hibernos sophia mirabile cluris."

Jonas, a Roman Catholic writer, bears testimony at once to the independence of her inhabitants of all foreign ecclesiastical authority, and to their enjoyment of Christian doctrine, and also to the influence of that doctrine upon their faith. He writes thus, "a nation which, although without the laws of other nations, yet so flourishing in the vigour of Christian doctrine, that it exceeds the faith of all the neighbouring nations." (Vit. Colum. c. 1.) And Bede says of them, "They observed only those works of piety and chastity which they could learn in the prophetical, evangelical, and apostolical *writings*." And he too was a Roman Catholic. He says of St. Adamnanus, "He was a good man, and wise, and most nobly instructed in the knowledge of the Scriptures." It is remarkable, that while this venerable historian manifestly condemns the independence of the Irish Chris-

tians, he bears this candid and generous testimony to their character. Speaking of St. Aidan, he says, that “although he could not keep Easter contrary to the manner of them that sent him, yet he was careful diligently to perform the works of faith, godliness, and love, according to the manner used by holy men. Wherefore he was justly beloved of all, even those who differed from him with respect to Easter; and he was not only held in reverence by those of meaner rank, but also by the bishops themselves—Honorius of Canterbury, and Felix of the east Angles.”

Ancient Erin was the island of missions, from which emanated those crowds of sainted teachers, from whom “savage clans and roving barbarians received the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion,” and from whom the greater part of Britain first heard the blessed truths of the gospel.

It is pleasing to find a foreigner, M. Rapin, doing justice to this fair claim of Ireland, which will probably be ridiculed by some of her sons at home. He says,—“It is *surprisingly strange* that the conversion of the English should be attributed to Austin, rather than to Aidan, Finian, to Colman, to Cedd, to Dimna, and the other Scottish” (or Irish) “monks, who undoubtedly laboured much more abundantly than he.” (Hist. of Eng. Fol. Lond. 1732, p. 80.)

In the primitive Christian church of Ireland the Bible was read, as we have seen, by all in their vulgar tongue; the laity of every rank and age, the women, the very children were encouraged, nay directed to engage in this hallowed occupation; and

therefore was the church orthodox and flourishing at home, and zealously employed in spreading its blessings abroad. But when the light was extinguished by the Danes, and the churches and colleges destroyed, and the Bible itself immured in a foreign language, darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people ; until that Word, which is “the religion of Protestants,” broke the clouds, and gave the promise of a better day.

The second remarkable missionary of these early times, whose history is well authenticated, is St. Colomba. He is said to have been the first missionary who planted the banner of the cross upon the banks of Lough Foyle ; and many places in Ulster were renowned for the institutions he established.

Colomba was born in 521 during the reign of Markertach. He was of the blood royal. “His father was Felim, son of Fergus, who was grandson of the great Nial, king of Ireland, known as ‘Nial of the Nine Hostages.’ The mother of Felim was Aithne, daughter of Lorne, who first reigned in conjunction with his brother Fergus, over the Scots in Argyllshire.”

Colomba studied under Finian of Clonard, by whom, in his early youth, he was called a saint.* He also received instructions from St. Ciaran, who was himself a zealous preacher of the gospel. He died in the

* Ussher ranks Finian among the second order of Irish saints. He founded the abbey and city of Clonard. This spot, famous for literature and piety, stood on a rising bank of the Boyne, and was called Clonard-cluain-craind, the Field of the Western Height.

year 545, and the following year Colomba founded the important monastery of Durrough, or Daire, (now Derry), when he must have been about 24 or 25 years of age. One of his first occupations in his new monastery was the translation of portions of the New Testament.

“A copy of the four Evangelists, in his hand writing, is stated by Sir James Ware to have existed in his time.”

“In the annals of the four masters for the year 1006, mention is made of a splendid copy of the four Gospels said to have been written by Columbkille with his own hand; it was preserved at Kells in a case richly ornamented with gold.”*

Ussher speaks of another copy, also written by the same hand, and preserved in a monastery which he founded at Durrow, or Doiremagh, in the King’s county.

The venerable Bede gives the following notice of Durrow and its monastery,—“Before St. Columb came into Britain, he founded a noble monastery in Ireland, in a place which, from a great plenty of oaks, is in the language of the Scots called Dearmach, i. e. ‘the field of the oaks.’” Bede is honoured among

* The annals of the four masters were compiled by Michael O’Clery, in conjunction with three other antiquaries. Harris says, they were “chiefly drawn from the annals of Clonmacnoise, Inisfail, and Senat, as well as from other approved and ancient chronicles in Ireland.”

Mr. Petrie’s “Remarks on the history and authenticity of the autograph original of the annals of the four Masters,” may be seen in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy.

the saints of the Romish calendar, and is always distinguished by the name of venerable.

In the early ages of Christianity churches were few in number. The bishop and clergy resided together in Cathedra, which was the episcopal see, and where afterwards a cathedral church was erected on the ruins of some celebrated pagan temple, as that of Kildare in a Druidic grove of oaks. That of Derry in the same; those of Roscarberry and Lismore near Druidic caves; and Clogher within a Druidic stone circle. Ireland in the sixth century was divided into four provinces, over each of which a bishop presided as metropolitan, but without any such title. The monasteries of Columba were the bright constellations of our hemisphere, enlightening every part with the brilliant radiance of the Gospel and of learning.*

Adamnanus, in his account of St. Columbkille says, that he, “even from his boyhood, was given to a Christian education and the studies of wisdom.” He is said to have confounded gainsayers, and taught his disciples to support their doctrines by putting forward the testimonies of the sacred Scriptures. No wonder then that a church built upon two such pillars as these, should be, for a time at least, “a shining light;” by the ancient annalists compared to the celestial luminaries.—See Revel. c. 1.

The name originally given to Columbkille was Crimthan: he was afterwards called Columba, with the

* Sedwick's Antiquities.

surname of Cille or Kille, which signifies the Churches. He was called the Dove of the Churches, from the gentleness and simplicity of his character.

In the year 550, Columba revisited the scene of his early instructions. The esteem in which he was held was seen in the reception he met with, and is thus described :—" All the people in the monastery and its neighbourhood poured out to meet him, kissed him with the greatest reverence and affection, and, singing hymns and psalms of praise, led him to their church, surrounded with a rail of wood, carried by four men, to prevent his being incommoded by so immense a multitude."

Disgusted with the unabated, rancorous feuds of the provincial princes, among whom his own relatives, the Nials of the north and south, took a conspicuous part, Columba turned away from his own beloved island, and carried the message of peace to other places he had not hitherto visited. In the year 563, with twelve of his disciples, he sailed for the little island of Hy or Iona, which was assigned to him by the king of Albania, who was one of his relatives, and to whom the island belonged. He also trod the wild range of the Grampian Hills on the same divine mission ; and his labours, in the Lord, were blessed.

The Druids were the priests or clergy of the Celts. In the earliest ages they established themselves at Iona. Their religion was as old as that of the Magi of Persia, the Bramins of India, and the Chaldees of Babylon and Assyria. These all derived their doc-

trines from the religion of Noah and the antediluvians. The Celtic tribes were of the posterity of Japhet; and wherever they came they carried their religion with them, which suffered less change in the Highlands and islands of Scotland than in any other country. This was the reason why Cæsar asserted that Druidism had its first rise in Britain.

The Druids worshipped the sun, calling him the "source of all life." There are many remains of Druidical worship, curious stones, hillocks, and mounts still to be seen in many parts of these countries which they overran.

In 565 the Druids were expelled from Iona by St. Columbkille. At first they tried to persuade him that their religion and his was the same, hoping thereby that he would be induced to leave them in the peaceable possession of their tenement; but he soon taught them that a stronger than they had made over the island to him. He founded a monastery on it. In his notice of its privileges, the venerable Bede states, that its abbots had the superiority over the bishops of Scotland, and that it was accustomed to have a superior priest or abbot, to whose jurisdiction all the province, and the bishops themselves, though unusual, were placed in subjection, according to the example of St. Columba, who obtained these privileges for Hy.

The same venerable writer further states,—“Columba was the first doctor of the Catholic faith to the Picts over the mountains to the north, and was first founder of the monastery in the island of Hy, which

was venerable for a long time with many of the Scots and Picts."

Columba is said to have been the founder of several monasteries and churches, and to have ordained a great number of priests. They were termed Gille-de, that is, servants of God, which expression was afterwards changed to "Culdees." This order, instituted by Columba, maintained their ground in various parts of Scotland against the encroachments of Popery, until the fourteenth century, when they were suppressed. The influence of the religion which the Culdees taught was very powerful over the minds of men, and induced Constantine, king of Cornwall, to renounce an earthly kingdom, and join himself to Columba, in pointing out the way to obtain a heavenly kingdom.

After having established the Christian religion in most of the isles around Iona, Columba turned his attention to the Picts. He resided for some time in the court of Brudius, at Inverness, where he met with a prince of the Orkney isles, and won him over also to the doctrines of the cross of Christ. His sanction and protection of Christianity proved very serviceable in the overthrow of idolatry.

The establishment of the Culdees was divided into colleges of twelve brethren and an abbot in each, the abbot having supreme authority over the brethren in his college; and all were under the control of the abbot of Iona.

The abbot and Culdees of Iona were held in such veneration by the people, that all things civil, as well

as religious, were submitted to their government, and their influence and exertions diffused blessings among the neighbouring people far and wide.

King Oswald of Northumbria while an exile in Iona, was converted to Christ, and sent Aidan from thence to his own country, with twelve of his disciples, to instruct his people in the doctrines of Christianity. Aidan was both an Irishman and a Culdee.

By his exertions the young were instructed in all branches of useful learning, and churches were built throughout the country. "Images or statues were not seen or admitted in any of their places of worship, as is recorded by Sedulius, one of the early Irish divines. On the contrary, they were condemned as 'heathenish and idolatrous.' And this testimony is also given by other writers at these times."

It is said, that so rapid was the progress of Christianity by means of the preaching of Aidan, that in seven days 15,000 persons were baptized. He preached in the Irish or Gaelic language which Oswald himself interpreted to his people.

The influence of Iona was soon felt throughout England as well as Scotland, and also over many parts of the continent of Europe. In Switzerland several thousands are said to have been converted by missionaries sent from Iona; and the inhabitants were so struck with the simplicity and the strictly moral lives of the Culdees, that they made them princes of the empire. Thus was this little dreary, storm-beaten island, chosen of God to be the depository of his pure

gospel for centuries ; and from this speck in the wide creation, issued streams to make fruitful and enlighten many nations.

“ Columba’s views were strictly evangelical, and his followers boldly set their faces against the errors of the Church of Rome,” as each of these sprang up and spread. The Culdees constantly appealed to the Bible, as the only standard of truth, in testimony of the precepts they taught.

“ The Culdees were permitted to marry ; and in the religious disputes which agitated the world, a book was written from Iona, by St. Clement, against image worship.”

For nearly six hundred years the successors of St. Columba followed his steps with devoted zeal ; but at length the little favoured island fell a victim to Popery and piracy.*

What Iona once was, we may in some measure judge from its interesting ruins. Its cathedral was 115 feet in length, 23 in breadth, the transept 70 feet long. Over the centre there is a handsome tower ; on each side of which there is a window, with stone work of different forms in every one. On the south side of the chancel, there are gothic arches supported by pillars with very peculiar capitals carved round with various devices. One is an angel weighing souls. There are also the ruins of a nunnery and chapel. And tombs and monuments, much defaced by time,

* See “ Children’s Friend,” 1835, vol. 12.

weather, and the footsteps of visitors, are still to be seen in the island.

Iona was the burying place of the Scottish, French, Irish, and Norwegian kings; as also of many lords of the isles, bishops, abbots, and chieftains. Iona is about three miles in length, and one and a half in breadth. It contains about 400 inhabitants, and is situated on the western coast of Scotland.

Irish history informs us, that Columba revisited his native country at the solicitation of his much valued friend Scaulan, king of Ossory, who wanted him to intercede with the reigning monarch Aodh, for a repeal of the sentence of banishment, which he had pronounced against him and the poets.

This was the fourth time that the decree had been issued to expel the poets and bards on account of their increasing numbers, their ostentation, and insupportable arrogance. The whole nation groaned under their encroachments. Whatever they demanded was yielded to them, rather than provoke the poet's satire or forfeit his praise. The antiquaries especially brought in heavy charges against them. The sole study and occupation of these poets was the composition of satirical rhyme, or fulsome praise, according to the reward they received. They meddled not with the history, or any learned branch of the literature of their country.

The assembly now convened for their expulsion was held at Drumceat, and the debate had been already extended to a great length, when St. Columba appeared

to take part in it. His purpose of pleading for the bards, &c., was changed as soon as the monarch had explained to him the great evils of which they were the cause ; and he joined in the expediency of dismissing from the realm such disturbers of the general tranquillity ; and in place of these bards, it was decreed that the monarch, provincial kings, &c., should each maintain a poet in his own household, conferring upon him a competent livelihood, and granting to him the same privileges that were enjoyed by the Fileas, or Antiquaries.

A certain number of free schools were at this time appointed and endowed.

From a statistical survey of Londonderry, by the Rev. G. Sampson, the following extract is taken :—

“As to the ecclesiastical records of Derry, we find those of St. Columbkille among the earliest. This remarkable person was born at Gartan, in the county of Donegal. His relatives of the noble family of Kennel, Conell, from whom the county was named Tyr-Connel, granted to him the district of Derry-on-the-Foyle. On quitting this pleasant abode for Scotland, he composed the following lines :—

‘ My fragrant bank and fruitful trees farewell,
Where pensive mortals mixed with angels dwell.
Here angels shall enjoy my sacred cell,
My sloe, my nut, mine apple, and my well.’

“It seems to be agreed, that in the year 565, Bri-deus, a powerful chief of the Piets, gave to St. Columb the little island of Hy (Iona) which from him was

called Hy-colm-cille. Here he erected a monastery, famous in after ages as a seminary of learning, and a burying-place of saints and kings. Columba himself was the first buried there in the year 597, being in the 77th year of his age. His remains were afterwards removed to Down, and laid in the vault with those of St. Patrick and St. Bridgid."

In the fifth century of the Christian era, Ireland was indisputably the most celebrated country in the western world for civilization and learning. At this period the western and southern parts of the Roman empire were overrun by the Goths, Vandals, Huns, Franks, and other barbarians, partly German, partly Scythic. All kind of learning was destroyed by them, wherever they came. Many, therefore, of those who loved learning, and sought retirement from the noise and din of arms, took refuge in Ireland, a country which it is well known had never been under the Roman yoke, and therefore the barbarians made no attempt to subdue it. Ireland then stood alone the seminary of literature, when all the western world had become illiterate, barbarous, and rude. The venerable Bede states that the Saxons flowed over to Ireland as to the mart of good literature; and it was a common expression, when any one went there, "He is gone to Ireland to be bred."

All the Irish chronicles tell us of four great universities then in Ireland—Ardmagma, Cashil, Dundee-Cathghlas, and Lismore.

Both by Camden and Spencer it is asserted, that in Ireland the ancient Saxons or English first learned the art of forming letters in writing.

But if the Irish were celebrated for learning, from the year of our Lord 432 until the year 820, when the heathen Danes and Norwegians first invaded the country, much more was their sanctity known and admired. The number who devoted themselves to a religious life is almost beyond credibility.

Eric of Auxerre writeth thus to the emperor Charles the Bald :—"What shall I speak of Ireland, which, setting by the dangers of the sea, flitteth all of it well nigh with whole flocks of philosophers unto our shores? Of whom so many as are more skilful and learned than the rest, do voluntarily banish themselves to attend dutifully on the wise Solomon, and be at his command."

The learned and ingenious antiquary Camden, in speaking of the Irish, says,—“This monastic profession was far different in those days from that of our time; they desired to be, indeed, that which they were named to be; they were far from colourable dealing or dissembling; erred they in any thing, it was through simplicity, not through lewdness, much less of wilful obstinacy. As for wealth and those worldly things, they so highly contemned them, that they did not only seek for, but also refused the same, though they were offered unto them descended by inheritance.”

The same author further says :—"In very late times, such as gave themselves to religion there, did mortifie their flesh even to a miracle, by watching, praying, and fasting." And again he says :—"The Scottish monks in Ireland and Brittain highly excelled for their holiness and learning, and sent out whole

flocks of most devout men into all parts of Europe, who were the first founders of Luxen Abbey in Burgundy, of Roby Abbey in Italy, of Witzburg Abbey in Frankland, of St. Gallus in Switzerland, of Malmesbury, Lindisfern, and many other monasteries in Britain."

Ireland was also at this time full of riches. Both gold and silver mines were discovered in very early times, from which were made a profusion of golden chains, worn by the princes and champions, gold rings, silver shields, &c. &c. ; besides numerous utensils dedicated to religious purposes, all of which were made of the purest gold and silver. There were also cases made for relics and for books of the same valuable metals. In addition to these internal sources of wealth, the Irish were enriched by spoil gathered from foreign countries, and by extensive trade with France, Spain, &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

Monastery founded at Banchor—Austin's mission to England, A.D. 600—Ancient MS. preserved in Trinity College, Cambridge—Aversion of the Irish to the Roman missionaries—Letter to the Irish preserved by Bede—Columbanus, a native of Ireland—Doctrine taught by Bede—The British priests assembled in a Synod—Austin's reception—Abbot of Bangor's reply to Austin—The first Papal Archbishop of Armagh in 1200—The Pope assumes the title of Catholic Bishop—Pope Gregory I.—Letter to the Empress Constantine—Doctrine of Sedulius in 818—King Alfred in Ireland—His poem—Firgil or Vigilius, an Irishman, distinguished for learning; consecrated 767—Anathematised for his discourse on the antipodes and spherical form of the earth—Sir William Betham's account of the ancient Irish Church.

THE sixth century was famed for men of learning and sanctity, of Irish birth. About this time Angellus founded the monastery of Bangor or Banchor in Ulster. It was called the College of Christian Philosophers in the reign of Arthur, king of England, about the year 530.

Bernard, in his life of Malachy, says that this college was the head or principal abbey of all the monasteries in Europe. He describes it as "the seminary or bee-hive of many thousand monks, who after the apostolic manner procured their own living by the

labour of their hands and the sweat of their brow.' Congellus or Comgal, its founder, was born in Ulster of honorable parents, and after having visited various places, he entered the monastery of St. Kieran at Clonmacnoise, where he received orders, and afterwards founded the famous abbey of Banchor. Columbanus, who travelled through France, Germany, and Italy, was his disciple. Hanmer says that "many singular learned men of Irish birth were trained up here, and also, in after times, Britains, Saxons, and Scots."

In the year 600, St. Austin was sent on his mission to the English by Pope Gregory the First; and submission to the See of Rome was especially and urgently claimed by him from the British Christians.

A very ancient MS. preserved in Trinity College, Cambridge, (cxlv. Art. 173,) informs us that the Britons lived in tolerable peace with the Saxons, while the latter were heathens; but after that, by the preaching of Austin, the Saxons became Christians, *in such sort as Austin had taught them*, "the Brythans would not, after that, nether eate nor drynke wyth them; because they corrupted with superstition, ymages, and ydolatrie, the true religion of Christ."

The fact which Bede has distinctly asserted, that before the arrival of St. Austin, the British and Irish churches agreed in several points of discipline, in which they completely differed from the church of Rome, and to which they obstinately adhered in contempt of her authority, demonstrates still further the truth of an early mutual connexion, under cir-

cumstances quite independent of the interference of that See.

The venerable Bede relates, that “so great was the aversion that the Irish in particular bore to all the Roman Missionaries, that Deganus, a bishop of that nation, not only declined sitting with them at the same table, but would not even lodge with them under the same roof. He also tells us that Columbanus, an abbot of Ireland, held the same opinions, and refused to have intercourse with the legates from Rome.

Bede has presented us with a letter, written A.D. 609, and directed from Laurentius, Melitus, and Justus, who had been sent from Rome to England to assist Austin, “*to the Scots that inhabit Ireland,*” which letter runs thus,—“But knowing the Britons, we thought the Scots were better than they. But we have learned by Bishop Deganus coming into this island, and Columbanus the abbot, coming into France, that these differ nothing from the Britons in their conversation. For Bishop Deganus coming unto us, would not only not eat with us, but not so much as eat his meat in the house where we were.”

In a recent work, entitled “A Compendious Ecclesiastical History,” we find the following satisfactory testimony to the advancement of religion and literature in these early ages:—“Christianity was now subduing the remnants of paganism in England, and exciting there and in Ireland a spirit of apostolical zeal, which disseminated the light of truth among many barbarous nations in the west of Europe. The Suevi, Boii, and Franks of Germany were converted

by St. Columbanus, in the early part of the seventh century. St. Gallus became the apostle of Switzerland; St. Kilianus of the eastern Franks; and St. Willibred and his companions, of Batavia, Frisland, and Westphalia. These holy missionaries were all natives of Ireland, except the last, who was an Anglo-Saxon."

In Mosheim's Church History, (part I. chap. i.) we find similar statements. During the seventh century he says, "Many of the British, Scottish, and Irish ecclesiastics, travelled among the Batavian, Belgic, and German nations, with the pious intention of propagating the knowledge of the truth, and of erecting churches, and forming religious establishments among them. This was the true reason which induced the Germans in after times to found so many convents for the Scots and Irish, of which some are yet in being.

"Columban, an Irish monk, seconded by the labours of a few companions, had happily extirpated in the preceding century (the sixth) the ancient superstitions in Gaul, and the parts adjacent, where idolatry had taken the deepest root: he also carried the lamp of celestial truth, among the Suevi, the Boii, the Franks, and other German nations, and persevered in these pious and useful labours until his death, which happened A.D. 615. St. Gal, who was one of his companions, preached the Gospel to the Helvetii, and the Suevii." Mosheim, in another place, speaks of Columbanus as a "native of Ireland, who became famous on account of the monastic rules he prescribed to his followers, his zeal for establishing religious orders, and his poetical productions."

Columbanus was a native of Leinster. He studied under Silenus, who explained the Scriptures to the youth, whom he instructed with extraordinary clearness. He is spoken of in Warner's Ecclesiastical History as being eminently useful in England. Warner says, that "He adhered to the custom of the Irish church in celebrating Easter; which being opposite to the Roman, observed in France, acquired him the censure of some of the neighbouring clergy." He was cited to appear at a provincial synod in France on account of this mode of celebration after the manner of his own country, and he wrote his apology in two letters to Boniface. He also wrote commentaries on the Psalter, a book against the Arians; several treatises on the Paschal controversy; together with a number of homilies, epistles, poems, &c. He travelled through France, then passed into Italy and built the monastery of Bobi, on the Appenines, near Naples, in which he ended his days.

The Northumbrians were converted to Christianity by means of Aidan, their bishop, who, as you have already heard, was a native of Ireland, and came from the monastery of Iona. Bede gives a high character of this man—remarkable for humility, great zeal, and probity; "but," he observes, that "his zeal was without knowledge, because he kept the feast of Easter, not as the Church of Rome did."

He governed the Church of Northumberland for nearly seventeen years, and established schools for the religious and literary instruction of adults as well as children. He wrote commentaries on the Scrip-

tures, sermons and homilies, and was an honour to his country.

Adanus, sometimes called Maeldoc, was born in Connaught of honourable parentage. He erected monasteries in Kinsale and Clonmore. He is spoken of by Bale and Bede as one of the luminaries of the age he lived in, and was called *filius stellæ*. He founded a monastery at a place called Ferna, now Ferns. Hanmer says, that “It is recorded of this Adanus, how that one coming to him and desiring him to assign him a confessor, his answer was, ‘Thou needest no confessor but God, who knoweth the secrets of thy heart; but if thou wilt have a witness of thy doings, go to one Molva, a learned man, who shall direct thee in thy course.’”

Ireland might then be truly called the island of saints. The idolatrous worship of Rome had not polluted her churches, where the faith once delivered to the Apostles was preached as transmitted by them in purity and soundness of doctrine. Bede was a *Catholic*—so were Fenelon and Pascal; but they did not embrace the soul-destroying errors of Romanism. Bede lived in the eighth century: his doctrines may be seen in his writings.

“He who in our times coming in the flesh preached the way of life to the world, even he himself also came before the flood and preached to them who were then unbelieving and lived carnally; for even he, by his Holy Spirit, was in Noah, and in the rest of the holy men who were at that time, and by their good conversation, preached to the wicked men

of that age, that they might be converted to better morals."

The mode in which Austin's efforts to press upon the Britons the supreme authority of the court of Rome were received, demonstrates clearly the opinions, on that subject, which the Irish entertained. The account is taken from Stapleton's Translation of Bede, printed at St. Omer's, A.D. 1622, lib. ii. c. 2.

The British priests assembled in a synod, had acknowledged the preaching of St. Austin to be the true way of righteousness; "but yet, they said, that they could not alter and change their old customs and ordinances, without the consent of their clergy and people; they desired, therefore, that they might have a second synod of greater multitudes."

There had been an agreement made by the British bishops and clergy, as to the manner in which they should form their opinions of Austin and his mission. They agreed not to enter until after he was seated in the place where the synod were to meet; and when they came in afterwards, they were to form their judgment of him according to the manner in which he received them. "If, when ye approach near, he ariseth courteously to you, think ye he is the servant of Christ, and so hear ye him obediently; but if he despise you, nor will vouchsafe to rise at *your* presence, which are the more in number, let him likewise be despised of you: and truly so did they. For it happened that when they came thither, St. Austin was already there, and sat in his chair; which, when they saw, straight waxing wroth, they noted him of pride;

and therefore endeavoured to overthwart and gainsay whatsoever he proposed."

Among other propositions, he told them that if they would agree with Rome, in the time of Easter; the ministrie of baptisme according to the Roman church, &c. "All your other ceremonies, rites, fashions, and customs, *though they be contrary to ours*, yet we will willingly suffer them."

But they answered, "that they would do none of the things required, neither would they compte him for their Archbishop; saying with themselves, nay, if he would not so much as rise to us, truelie, the more we should now subjecte ourselves to him, the more would he hereafter despise us, and set us at nought." In consequence of this, Austin departed, denouncing against them the vengeance of heaven; which afterwards was, as Bede informs us, fully wreaked on them by Edilfrid an English prince, when "foule slaughter of this unfaithful and naughty people took place."

The historian adds,—"It is reported that there were slain in the warre, of them which came to praie, about 2,200 men; and only fiftie to have escaped by flight." These were the priests and other members of the British church, who thus resisted unto death the arrogant attempts that were in this manner made to impose upon them the supremacy of Rome.

There is found in the original Welch language, among the Concilia of Wilkins, vol. i. p. 26, a document styled, "the answer of the abbot of Bangor to Austin the monk, seeking subjection to the church of

Rome," which protests against her assumptions in the following language :—

" Be it known, and without doubt unto you, that we all are, and every one of us, obedient and servants to the church of God, and to the Pope of Rome, and to every true Christian and godly, to love every one in his degree, in charity perfect ; and to help every one of them by word and deed, to be the children of God ; *and other obedience than this, I do not know due to him whom you name the Pope,* nor to be the father of fathers, to be claimed and to be demanded ; and this obedience we are ready to give and to pay to him, and to every Christian continually. *Besides,* we are under the government of the Bishop of Caerleon upon Usk, who is to oversee, under God, over us, to cause us to keep the way spiritual." Such were the meek Christians who were so cruelly butchered, through the influence of a proud bigot.

Taliessein, the ancient bard of the Britons, shortly after this period, expresses his feelings in the following strain,—

" Wo be that priest yborne,
That will not cleanly weed his corne,
And preach his charge among ;
Wo be to that Shepheard, I say,
That will not watch his fold alway,
As to his office doth belong ;
Wo be to him that doth not keepe
From Romish wolves his sheepe
With staffe and weapon strong."

Chronicle of Wales, p. 264.

Archbishop Ussher was fully justified in alleging the independence of the ancient Irish ; his judgment on that subject was founded on facts, established upon testimony in every respect unquestionable, and which could not be mistaken.

The best of our modern writers on ecclesiastical history, Mosheim, writes thus :—“ The ancient Britons and Scots persisted long in the maintenance of their religious liberty ; and neither the threats nor the promises of the legates of Rome could engage them to submit to the decrees and authority of the ambitious pontiff ; as appears manifestly from the testimony of Bede.”

Milner says, “ that attempts were made all this time, by the bishops of Rome, to induce the Irish to unite themselves to the English Church,” meaning that of Austin ; “ but in vain.” He fixes the year 716 as the period when “ this people were reduced to the Romish communion.”

We are informed that the first archbishop of Armagh appointed by the Pope, was Egan Mac Gillivider, in the year 1206 ; and this was only on the opportunity that offered of deciding a contested election. This appointment would not have been attempted, were not the dastardly John upon the British throne ; and, still further, it became necessary to purchase the consent of that mean prince, by a gift to him of three hundred marks of silver, and three of gold.

The Pope himself had not assumed the title of Catholic or universal bishop, until after a century had

passed away from the time of St. Patrick's death, which event took place on the 17th of March, 465. There are extant letters written A.D. 591, or thereabouts, by the Pope Gregory I., entitled the Great, in which he condemns John, bishop of Constantino-ple, for assuming that title. In one of these, addressed to the Empress Constantia, the prelate expresses himself in the following very remarkable language, as translated from the Latin:—

“But when this, my same brother, with a novel presumption and pride, calls himself ‘Catholic Bishop;’ (so as to cause himself, in the time of my predecessor of holy memory, to be addressed in a synod by that proud name, although all the acts of that synod, the Apostolical See, being against them, he dissolved), his most serene highness (the Emperor) gave me some sorrow, in that he did not correct him who had thus arrogated, but rather studiously tried to turn me the more from my intention—me, who in this cause defend the ordinances of the gospels and the canons, for the sake of humility and rectitude. But it is a very lamentable thing that he should patiently permit so far, that, in contempt of all others, this my *brother* and *fellow*-bishop should endeavour to be called *sole* bishop. But indeed what else is manifested in this his pride, but that the times of antichrist are nigh at hand, even now? Because, forsooth he is imitated, who, scorning social bliss among legions of angels, strove to break forth to the height of singularity, saying, ‘I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven; I will sit in the mountain of the

covenant, in the sides of the north ; I will ascend above the height of the clouds ; I will be like to the Most High.' ”

Such passages as the following require no explanation, to shew how widely they differ from that which Romanism now teaches :

St. Augustine* says, “ Tum irascitur angelus, quando ipsum colere volueris ; ” “ An angel is offended when you desire to worship him ; ” and so, of course, would St. Augustine, were you to invoke him.

Sedulius's doctrine, so late as the year 818, is thus clearly explained :—

“ All mankind stood condemned in the apostolical root (of Adam) with so just and divine a judgment, that even were none of them freed from thence, no man could rightly blame the justice of God ; and such as were freed must have been so freed, that from the many that were not freed, but left in their most just condemnation, it might be manifested what the whole lump had deserved. That also the due judgment of God had condemned even such as are justified, unless mercy had relieved them from that which was due ; that every mouth of those who gloried in their *merits* might be stopped, and he that glorieth should glory in the Lord.” See Rom. ix.

“ God hath so ordered it, that he will be gracious to mankind, if they do believe that they are to be freed by the blood of Christ.” “ The patriarchs and the prophets were not justified by the works of the

* Bishop of Hippo ; not Austin, the missionary from Rome to Britain.

law, but by faith." "This faith, when it hath been justified, sticks in the soil of the soul, like a root that hath received a shower, that when it hath begun to be cultivated by the law of God, boughs may rise up again on it, which may bear the fruit of works; *therefore the root of righteousness doth not grow out of works, but the fruit of works from the root of righteousness*, namely, from that root of righteousness which God doth accept for righteousness without works." Rom. iv. Gal. ii.

St. Clement, the third bishop of Rome, who lived in the first century, says—"We are not justified by ourselves, neither by our own wisdom, or knowledge, or piety, or the works that we have done in holiness of heart; but by that faith by which Almighty God hath justified all men from the beginning." The celibacy of the clergy was confessedly introduced of late years. By his own confession, and the accounts of his contemporaries, St. Patrick was the son of Calphurnius, a deacon, and his grandfather Politius was a priest.

So late as the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, in the very See of Armagh, "the primacy passed to the chief of the Sept, as a kind of inheritance, for fifteen generations."* Thus Amolgoid, who was primate in the year 1021, was father to two bishops of that See. Celsus, bishop of Armagh, who died A.D. 1129, was a married man. (See a manuscript, T.C.D. c. i. 26,) where it is said that his marriage was more *gentis*

* Bernard's Life of Malachi, c. 7, and Harris Ware, pp. 49 and 54.

suæ. The eight primates who preceded him were also married.

This practice became so offensive to the Pope, Innocent III., that he wrote letters to John Sacernitaness, his legate in Ireland, A.D. 1104, "that he should abolish that bad usage in Ireland, by which sons and grandsons succeeded to the benefices of their fathers and grandfathers."

Thus did the Irish remain constant "to one line of descent, as well in their abbots as their kings. St. Paul says, "A bishop must then be blameless, the husband of one wife," &c. 1 Tim. iii. 12. Titus i. 6.

Towards the close of the seventh century, the *Northumbrian* king, Alfred, in his youth went into Ireland to pursue his studies, and it was said that the books he met with among the Christians so much engrossed his attention as to acquire for him the character of being most learned in the Scriptures. The name which the Irish gave to Alfred was Flan-fionn. He is the reputed author of a poetical manuscript in Irish, the subject of which is "Ireland, and the things he found there;" of which the following is a copy, taken from an old and valuable vellum manuscript, now in the library of W. Monck Mason, Esq.*

ITINERARY OF KING ALFRED IN IRELAND.

" I found in the fair Inisfail,
In Ireland, while in exile,
Many women, no silly crowd,
Many laics, many clerics.

* Historical Sketches of the native Irish.

- “ I found in each province
Of the five provinces of Ireland,
Both in church and state,
Much of food, much of raiment.
- “ I found gold and silver,
I found honey and wheat,
I found affection with the people of God,
I found banquets and cities.
- “ I found in Armagh the splendid,
Meekness, wisdom, circumspection,
Fasting, in obedience to the Son of God,
Noble, prosperous sages.
- “ I found in each great church,
Whether internal, on shore or island,
Learning, wisdom, devotion to God,
Holy welcome and protection.
- “ I found the lay monks,
Of alms the active advocates ;
And, in proper order with them,
The Scriptures without *corruption*.
- “ I found in Munster (geis) prohibition,
Kings, queens, and royal bards,
In every species of poetry well skilled—
Happiness, comfort, pleasure.
- “ I found in Conact, famed for justice,
Affluence, milk in abundance,
Hospitality, lasting vigour, fame,
In this territory of Croghan* of heroes.

* Croghan was the royal palace of Connaught.

“ I found in the country of Connell (Tirconnell),
 Brave, victorious heroes,
 Fierce men of fair complexion,
 The high stars of Ireland.

“ I found in the province of Ulster
 Long blooming beauty, hereditary vigour,
 Young scions of energy,
 Though fair, yet fit for war, and brave.

“ I found in the territory of Boyle
 * * * * * (*manuscript effaced*)
 Brehons, Erenachs, palaces,
 Good military weapons, active horsemen.

“ I found in the fair-surfaced Leinster,
 From Dublin to Slewmary,
 Long-living men, health, prosperity,
 Bravery, hardihood, traffic.

“ I found from Ara to Gle,
 In the rich country of Ossory,
 Sweet fruit, strict jurisdiction,
 Men of truth, chess-playing.

“ I found in the great fortress* of Meath,
 Valour, hospitality, and truth,
 Bravery, purity, and mirth—
 The protection of all Ireland.

“ I found the aged of strict morals,
 The historians recording truth :
 Each good, each benefit that I have sung,
 In Ireland have I seen.”

* The monarch's residence (Tara).

Bede, and also Turner, in his History of the Anglo-Saxons, state that many among them of the noble and middle classes left their country, and went to Ireland in the seventh century, to study the sacred writings. These the Irish received hospitably, supplying them with books and gratuitous instruction.

The great anxiety of the ancient Irish for the preservation of their copies of the holy Gospels is strikingly evinced by the religious care and veneration with which they enclosed them in cases of the most durable wood, generally yew or oak, which soon acquired a sanctity of character as the depositories of holy writ, and were then placed in boxes of brass or copper, plated with silver richly gilt, embossed with scriptural devices, the effigies of saints and bishops, and ornamented with settings of polished chrystals, amethysts, lapis lazuli, and other gems.

Many of these evidences of early Irish piety still exist in excellent preservation. One of these was given to the Museum of Trinity College, Dublin, by Mr. Kavanagh, of Borris, in the county of Carlow, in whose family it was handed down from very remote ages. It contains a few membranes of vellum, on which are written prayers for the sick, and extracts from the Scriptures. As these boxes became injured by time, they were repaired, by driving into them long brass pins, which often perforated the manuscript, to its great injury; and the aperture where the book was inserted, being closed up, the real contents became a mystery and were forgotten, and the most absurd and

ridiculous stories promulgated respecting them, by interested individuals, or superstitious votaries."

The Rev. J. H. Todd, F.T.C.D., gave lately to the Royal Irish Academy a short account of a manuscript of the four Gospels, of the seventh century and in Irish characters, which is preserved in the library of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth. The volume is a small quarto, in the minute hand called *Caroline*, common to all Europe in the reign of Charlemagne, but now used only in Ireland, and known as the Irish character. The present volume appears to have belonged to Maelbrigid Mac Dornan, or Mac Tornan, who was Archbishop of Armagh in the ninth century, and died A.D. 925. By him it was probably sent as a present to Athelstan, king of the Anglo-Saxons, who presented it to the city of Canterbury. These facts are inferred from an inscription in the Anglo-Saxon characters, (and in a hand of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century), which occurs on a blank page immediately following the genealogy in the first chapter of St. Matthew. The discovery of this manuscript, and the satisfactory proof which facts afford of its Irish origin, are important, as adding another to the many instances with which we are already acquainted, of the employment of the Irish scribes in the transcription of the Scriptures during the sixth and seventh centuries. It is now well ascertained that almost all the sacred books so highly venerated by the Anglo-Saxon church, and left by her early bishops as heir-looms to their

respective sees,, were obtained from Ireland, or written by Irish scribes.—January 7, 1838.

Alcuin, the Anglo-saxon, was accounted one of the best writers among the Saxons, with whom Bede and king Alfred are joined. Warton says these flourished in the eighth century.

Alcuin's religious opinions may be judged of, from the following passage expressed by himself. "Study Christ, as foretold in the books of the prophets, and as exhibited in the gospels; and when you find him, do not loose him: but introduce him into the home of thy heart, and make him the ruler of thy life. Love him as thy Redeemer, and thy Governor, and as the Dispenser of all thy comforts. Keep his commandments, because in them is eternal life."

In writing to a scholar, he said, "I wish the four gospels, instead of the twelve Eneids, filled your breasts. Read diligently, I beseech you, the gospels of Christ." Alcuin wrote the life Willibrod of Northumbria, who went as a Christian missionary into Friesland.

For this great work, Willibrod prepared himself in Ireland. His biographer asserts that he "studied twelve years in Ireland, under masters of high reputation, being intended for a preacher to many people." He ultimately settled at Wittenburgh, now Utrecht, and founded its school. He died in Eptenarch in 739.

Albin and Clement, Claudius, Sedulius, Duncan, an Irish Bishop, Erigina, Dungal, &c., are celebrated names found among the Irish, for learning and piety in these times.

The commentary of Claudius on the Galatians is printed, and his work on St. Matthew, is in the British Museum. Sedulius wrote on the Epistles of St. Paul. Both these authors, who were natives of Ireland, and were held in high estimation by Ussher, as appears in his "discourse on the religion anciently professed by the Irish and British."

"Firgil, or Virgilius (his latin name) descended of an ancient and honorable family in Ireland, left his native country and passed over to France, where he spent two years in the court of king Pepin, by whom he was kindly entertained for his learning and sweetness of behaviour. He was sent by the king to Otilo, Duke of Bavaria, to be preferred to the bishopric of Saltzburg. After two years stay in that province, he received consecration June 13, 767. He is the reputed writer of the glossary, quoted by Melchoir Goldast, in his notes on Colomban; and a discourse of the antipodes and spherical form of the earth, which he most truly held, though against the received opinion of the ancients, who imagined the earth to be a plain, and the heavens in some part to join it."*

The religion or philosophy of Italy, were unable to receive this truth, as may be deduced from the Roman pontiff, Zachary's epistle to Boniface, who was afterwards his successor in the papal chair. He thus writes, "If it be proved, that Virgilius hath advanced this impious and perverse doctrine, that there exists another world, and other men under the earth, deprive him of his priesthood, expel him from the Church."—

* Sir J. Ware's Irish Writers, 8th Cent.

That the Irish were lovers of learning, that they distinguished themselves in these times of ignorance by the culture of the sciences, beyond all the European nations, travelling through the most distant lands with a view to communicate their attainments; is a fact which is derived from the most authentic records of antiquity.*

“Boniface was at variance with Virgilius, a Bavarian priest, who was, however, a native of Ireland; among other things, because he taught that the world was round, and that there was antipodes.”†

Pope Zachary’s 10th letter, pronounces damnation against this Hibernian philosopher.

From an essay for private circulation, of Sir William Betham, we give the following extract:—“The Irish church, though united in articles of revealed faith to the Church of Rome, as a centre of unity, was in every other respect independent, down to the year 1152. The first act of hostility to that independence, was committed by the Danes of Dublin; who, from deep-rooted national antipathy to the Irish, refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of Armagh, and therefore promised obedience to the see of Canterbury. This national quarrel first suggested to the court of Rome, the facility of subduing both. But no Irishman ever raised his voice in favour of this subjugation, before the arrival of St. Malachy O’Morgair from Rome, in 1138. A legatine commission had been granted to Gillibert of Limerick, who wrote a book in 1090.

* Mosheim’s *Ecles. Hist.*, Cent. 8.

† Mascon’s *Hist. of Ancient Germans*, b. xvi. c. 2.

maintaining that every missal different from the Roman is schismatical ; but not one Irish ecclesiastic was found to support him in that controversy. Perceiving, therefore, that nothing could be effected by such odious instruments as the Danes, the legatine commission was granted to St. Malachy : but whether he was too much of an Irishman, or whether his gentle manners disqualified him for the turbulent task of altering the discipline of a whole nation, though he was honoured with the pall, he resigned his commission, and returned to Clairville—too happy to die in that peaceful solitude, and in the arms of his excellent friend St. Barnard, A.D. 1148. The task of subjugation was reserved for Cardinal Paparo, and the council of Kells, in 1152. That some salutary regulations were enacted in that synod, cannot be denied—but that it entailed a foreign yoke on Ireland, which has, if not solely, at least most powerfully contributed to exclude the Irish from the benefits of full political and religious liberty to this very day, he who cannot observe, must be disqualified from judging of historical events. The advantages gained by the synod of Kells, were yet found inadequate to the attainment of entire success ; and the people of Ireland still adhering to their popular institutions, Pope Adrian IV. felt the necessity of issuing his celebrated bull, which was transmitted to Henry II. several years before the Anglo-Norman invasion. The object of Alexander III.'s bull was in substance the same, to enforce the acts of the synod of Kells by arms, to make Ireland subject to England, by papal

donation ; and to reclaim barbarians to the principles of Christianity.

“ All those parts of the Roman missal, which precede the seventh century, are quoted by S. S. Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, and others of the fourth, fifth, and sixth, and agree in substance, and for the most part verbally, with the same parts of the Irish ; but all the improvements in the Roman missal, all festivals and prayers that have been added since the tenth century, are wanting in the Irish. The prayer *Deus qui humanæ substantiæ*, which is recited when a few drops of water are mixed with the wine, is missing in the Irish ; the ceremony itself is entirely omitted, as of human institution. The bread and wine are offered simultaneously, &c.”

CHAPTER IX.

Curious old boxes, containing portions of Scripture—The box “Caah” belonging to the O'Donnell family—Its contents—Description—Sketch of St. Columba—His last work and death—Another relic called Meeshac—Date found on it—The book of Armagh—Fragment of the Brehon law—Description of Ireland by St. Donatus—The Caoinean, or Irish cry—Antiquity of the custom traced to the Jews and Phenicians.

THE curious old boxes, which as family relics were handed down from generation to generation, with a superstitious veneration is a very interesting circumstance. Their contents remained long unexplored. The information I have given in a former chapter respecting them, was taken from the very interesting and valuable work of Sir William Betham, who says he has seen four, and is himself in possession of two of these boxes.

The following extract from his work gives the history and description of the celebrated box called CAAH, belonging to the O'Donnell family, in the possession of Connel O'Donnell, Esq. “The box was opened and examined in the presence of Sir Capel Molyneux, Mr. O'Donnell and myself.

“The contents were found to be a rude wooden

box, very much decayed, inclosing a MS. on vellum, a copy of the ancient vulgate translation of the Psalms in Latin, of fifty-eight membranes. It appeared to have been originally stitched together, but the sewing had almost entirely disappeared. On one side was a thin piece of board covered with red leather, very like that with which eastern MSS. are bound. It was so much injured by damp, as to appear almost a solid mass; by steeping it in cold water I was enabled to separate the membranes from each other, and by pressing each separately between blotting paper, and frequently renewing the operation, at length succeeded in restoring, what was not actually decayed, to a legible state.

"The MS. was originally about nine inches long by six wide. It has been most injured at the beginning; all the membranes before the 31st Psalm are gone, and the first few of those which remain are much decayed, but they gradually improve in their condition, and the last thirty have only lost their first and last, or top and bottom lines; the last membrane contains the first thirteen verses of the 106th Psalm. From the depth of the wooden box, there is no doubt but it once contained the whole psalter. I have collated several of the Psalms with the Venetian vulgate before mentioned, and find them to agree nearly verbatim. It contains the singular passage in the 18th verse of the 103rd Psalm, (104th in the English Bible) after—

"Illic passeret nificabunt,
Erodi domus dux est eorum."*

* In the Venetian—Herodii domus dux est eorum.

“The Caah is a brass box, nine inches and a half long, eight broad, and two thick. It is divided into three compartments, or rather arches, supported and separated by clustered columns. In the centre is a sitting figure of St. Columba, with his hair flowing over his shoulders, holding up his right hand, of which the third and fourth fingers are folded down; in his left he has a book. The arms of the chair on which he sits are curiously carved with eagle’s heads. In the right compartment is a figure of a bishop in his full pontificals, with his mitre, holding up his right hand, having the third and fourth fingers folded, and grasping a crozier with his left hand. In the third department is the representation of the Passion, with the glory round the head, and, as is usually represented, the two Marys, one on each side of the cross. Over the arms of the cross are engraved two birds, apparently doves; these figures are chased in relief. Over the right arch is a figure (also chased) of an angel throwing up a censer, under which is the figure of a priest, holding something like a basket, and above is a grotesque figure like what is called a wyvern in heraldry. Over the left arch is a similar figure of an angel with a censer, above which is a figure like a wyvern, but with a human face, and below a griffin. Round the whole box is a chased border of about three quarters of an inch wide, on the top and bottom of which are grotesque figures of wyverns, or cockatrices, and lions; and on the sides, oak leaves and acorns; in each of the corners is a setting of rock chrysal: in the centre, at the top,

over that part of which I shall call the tabernacle, is a chrystal setting, surrounded by ten gems, a pearl, three small shells, a sapphire, and amethysts, all in the rough. Affixed to the right side of the box at the top, is a silver censer, suspended to a curious flexible chain. On the censer is an inscription in Gothic characters, but so much defaced as not to be legible.

“I am inclined to think the silver plate just described, although very ancient, to be more modern than the sides and other parts of the box, to which it is also much inferior in point of workmanship; the brass plate, to which it was riveted, is perforated with many holes in regular shapes, as if some ornaments had been originally fastened to it.

“The bottom of the Caah is of brass, plated with silver. Round the rim or outer plate is a mutilated inscription in the Irish character and language, of which the following is the translation:—

* * * * *

“ ‘Pray for Cathbarr O'Donnell, by whom this cover was made——

* * * * *

“ ‘And for Sitrick, the grandson of Hugh, who made——

* * * * *

“ ‘Gave to the abbot of Kells, by whom was made
———’

The sides and ends of the box are of brass, and consist of eight pieces, and four connecting plates, joined together like hinges. On the front, in the

centre, is fixed a semi-circular piece of silver workmanship divided into four compartments by three pillars ornamented with silver wire, all richly gilt, and which I suppose was intended to represent a shrine, or perhaps the tabernaculum, where the priest deposits the host on the altar. At the bottom is a silver plate, on which is engraved I. H. S. richly gilt. On the right of the tabernaculum are four, and on the left six oblong compartments, divided in pairs, one above the other, and surrounded by silver borders. The centre being richly inlaid with pure gold and chased; the back is also divided into fourteen similar compartments, the ten interior were also richly inlaid with gold and chased, the gold in-laying of two is gone, and in four others much injured? the four other compartments were plated with silver and chased in leaves and flowers. Between each pair of compartments are three silver round-headed rivets. The two end plates have been richly enamelled, on which is a silver serpentine pattern! very little of the enamel now remains. At each of the four corners is a hollow pillar, by which the top of the box was fixed to the body with four thick pins, with silver heads, which were so contrived as to be moveable at pleasure, so as to allow the top to be taken off, in order to get access to the MS., different in this respect, from all the other boxes. This box has evidently been frequently repaired.

“According to the Irish writers, the O'Donnell family, of which Columbkil was a member, are descended from Conall Golban, son of Neill of the nine

hostages, monarch of Ireland. The said Niall having granted the land now called the County of Donegal to his son Conall, it was denominated after him Tyr Conall, the land of Conall, and his descendants were called Kinel-Conall, or the descendants or tribe of Conall, his son.

“Fergus Ceannfadda had many sons, among whom was Sedna, ancestor to the O'Donnells, hereafter mentioned, and Felim, who by his wife, Aethena, daughter of *Dima Mac Nathi*, a prince of the house of Leinster, was the father of Columba, who was born in the year 521. According to some accounts his first name was Crimthan, which was changed to Columba on account of his kind and amiable manners, resembling a dove in disposition. To this name was added Cell or Kill, as stated by Bede, on account of the number of churches, or cells he founded, and to distinguish him from other saints of that name.”

The following sketch of St. Columba is of great interest :—

“He founded in Ireland, among many other monasteries, that of *Kenanus*, now called Kells, in the county of Meath, and also the Abbey of *Columbkil*, in the island of Hy or Iona, which had been granted to him by the king of the Picts; he was the apostle of the northern Picts, whom he converted to Christianity.

“It is mentioned of him by Adamnan, and his other biographers, that he transcribed many books. In the account of St. Columba, Lanigan, in his *Irish Ecclesiastical History*, gives the following statement, chap. xii. p. 14.—‘This day was on a Saturday; and

having expressed his joy at their being a sufficient store of corn for the year he announced to Diermit, with an injunction of secrecy, that said day would be his last in the world, as he was to be called away the night next after it. The saint then ascended a small eminence, and lifting up his hands, blessed the monastery. Thence returning, he sat down in a hut, adjoining, and forming part of the monastery, and occupied himself for some time with *copying part of the Psalter*, and having finished a page with part of the 33rd Psalm, he stopped and said, ‘*Let Baithen write the remainder.*’ He breathed his last early on the morning of Sunday, the 9th June, 597, in the 76th year of his age.’

“Whether this Psalter is that which was begun by St. Columbkil just before his death, and finished by Baithen, or another copy, written entirely by the saint himself, is a question of difficult solution, but that it was written by him there are good grounds to believe.

“Colonel Daniel O’Donnell, in the inscription on the silver case which he placed round the box in 1723, calls it the ‘*hereditary pledge of St. Columbanus.*’ ‘*Hereditarii Sancti Columbani pignoris,*’ and the Caah has always been handed down in the O’Donnell family, as containing the reliques of the saint.”

Of another of these venerable relics called the Meeshac—Sir W. Betham gives the following account: “When it came into my hands, it had all the appearance of having been long in a damp place, or buried in the earth. The rich tracery work of the

settings, and the chased silver plating, were not perceptible from the thick coating which covered its surface.

"The plates being very thin, it required great care and attention to remove its impurities without injury. On discovering the date of *anno domini cccccciii.*, I could scarcely credit the accuracy of my vision, especially as I had been taught to believe, dating by the Christian era, had not been used at so early a period in this country. After an accurate investigation, I feel perfectly satisfied the date is genuine; nor does it require any great exertion of faith, if we consider that Christianity, and consequent civilization had existed in Ireland for centuries before; the claim of the Irish to such a state, having been clearly established by unquestionable evidence, these remains powerfully corroborate that testimony."

Vallancy says, "Mr. O'Donell, of the barony of Innishowen, informs me, there was in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Barnard of Fahan, a precious box set with stones, called in Irish *Meeshac*, a word supposed to be Hebrew, and to signify a vow. This is ornamented with a crucifix and the twelve apostles, &c."

Sir W. Betham says, "The book of *Armagh* contains evidence of learning, beyond even the most sanguine hopes and expectations of the most patriotic Irishman, it exhibits an acquaintance with the Greek as well as the Latin tongue, and more, in it will be found evidences to confound the most sceptical, that Ireland in the seventh century, was a cultivated and civilized country, and had been so for centuries;

that Christianity had long before enlightened her people, and that not in isolated and individual cases, where its professors shrunk from its avowal, not here and there in a monastery on the coast, or in fortified places, surrounded by paganism and persecution, like an *oasis* in the desert; no, Ireland was then and long had been, a *Christian nation*, governed by wholesome laws, which protected the lives and properties of its inhabitants, and respected and shielded the stranger."

"The *Book of Armagh* is a MS. on vellum, of the small quarto size, eight inches high, six inches wide and about three inches thick. It is fairly written in columns on both sides of the membranes in the Irish character, mixed with Greek capitals, and is in fine preservation. It contains 221 membranes, and 442 pages: it is every where perfect, excepting the first membrane, part of the gospel of St. Matthew, and a few pages which have suffered so much by attrition as to deface the writing."

It has been bound in oak boards, covered with black leather, and was formerly covered with either silver plates, or pins in the figure of a cross surmounted by a saltire surrounded by a border. The stumps of the silver pins still remain, and are very thick and strong. It appears to have had a previous covering of crimson leather, similar to the old Turkey, part of which still remains, and its front was fastened with brass loops—a part of one is still extant.

"The singular case in which this MS. has been preserved, is of thick black leather, with raised ornaments of animals and grotesque devices. It has a

very ancient brass lock with a hasp, part of which still remains, and had originally eight brazen staples, which passed through the lid or cover, and appears to have had a bolt or pin pass through them and under the hasp, to fasten by the lock in a manner similar to the small portmanteau or valise of modern times."

The venerable Bede testifies that, "The Scots *diligently* observed the precepts to be found in the writings of the prophets, the gospels, and the apostles, but they knew nothing of the fathers and councils; they were ignorant of any Christianity, but that which was to be found in the sacred volume. The confession of faith of St. Patrick, is in perfect accordance. Colman, the bishop of Lindisfarne, (about the time when Aidus was writing this book of Armagh) told king Oswin, he had received from his fathers his faith and practice, who were virtuous men, beloved of God; and that it was the same which was observed by the blessed and highly favoured *St. John*, and the churches founded by him; which faith prevented Dagamus, the Scottish bishop, from eating, or ever residing in the same house with those bishops whom he considered as wandering from the truth; this faith also caused Colman and his followers to give up his bishopric, and their preferment, together with the favour of the royal Oswin, and all worldly considerations, rather than sacrifice the religious opinions which they believed to be founded on the rock of scripture authority."

"Bishop Ussher has clearly demonstrated, that the supremacy of Rome was unknown to the ancient

Irish, and that they consulted the sacred writings in their original language, making them the rule of their conduct ; and that to the English invaders of the 12th century, we are indebted for the establishment of a religion which has deluged the kingdom with blood ; and been the greatest source of almost all its calamities."

In the antiquarian researches, a fragment is given of the Brehon law, translated by the late learned Irish scholar, Theophilus O'Flanagan, the original of which is amongst the MSS. in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. It is a dissertation or comment on the laws themselves in question and answer, and is as follows :—

Q. "What are the three fundamental ordinances, from which neither law, nor judgment, nor reason, nor philosophers, can absolve !"

A. "*The holy communion, as contained in the Holy Scriptures.*"

"Tribute, sanctioned by three courses of old law, for preserving the stretch of old memory."

"*The regeneration of life by water, by which freedom from original sin is secured.*"

On this passage, Mr. O'Flanagan gives the following note : "Will any one deny this to be the Protestant religion ? The ancient Irish mention but *two sacraments* as necessary, viz. *the holy communion, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, and the regeneration of life by water, whereby freedom from original sin is secured* : (i. e.) *Baptism and the Lord's supper.**

* In accordance with the other doctrines professed by the early Irish church, this must be understood as implying not

These are the two great lessons inculcated by the statue, with which is, I may say, incorporated obedience to law and government. Blush England, who would stigmatise Ireland as the asylum of superstition, bigotry, and barbarism, to which *you* first gave birth in the land of saints, wisdom, liberty, and learning."

Sir W. B. adds, "I cannot help feeling strongly a participation in the generous burst of indignation of the patriotic and learned Irishman. If England did not give birth to superstition, and its curses in Ireland, she certainly was the willing instrument to secure their sway. The Roman See never completed its conquest over the Irish church, till it received the aid of the English sword, although by its secret and open agents, it had for centuries been sapping its purity."

The venerable Bede speaks of Ireland "as 'a rich and happy country, undisturbed by those bloody wars which harassed the rest of the barbarous ages : as a land to which the nobility and gentry of Britain resorted for their education : as a nation which gratuitously afforded maintenance, books, and masters to all strangers who came thither for the sake of learning."

"The Saxons flocked to Ireland, as to a great mart for learning ; hence we find this expression so often among our writers—such a person was sent over to

that the mere ordinance of baptism could free from original sin, but as showing the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, of which the water used in baptism is the lively emblem.

Ireland to be educated. Nor is there any reason to wonder that Ireland, now rude and barbarous, should once have been so full of learning and piety, when the rest of the world was involved in barbarism ; for so the wisdom of Providence ordereth it, that a shoot of knowledge may still remain for the good of mankind.*

St. Donatus, a bishop of Etruria, who died A.D. 840, in the following lines describes this island, under its ancient name Scotia :—

“ Far westward lies an isle of ancient fame,
By nature bless'd, and Scotia is her name ;
An island rich—exhaustless in her store
Of veiny silver and of golden ore.
Her fruitful soil for ever teems with wealth,
With gems her waters, and her air with health ;
Her verdant fields with milk and honey flow,
Her woolly fleeces vie with virgin snow ;
Her waving furrows float with bearded corn,
And arms and arts her envied sons adorn.
No savage bear with lawless fury roves,
No ravening lion through her sacred groves,
No poison there infects, no scaly snake
Creeps through the grass, no frog annoys the lake.
An island worthy of its pious race ;
In war triumphant, and unmatched in peace.”†

It is probable that many of our readers may have heard the doleful lamentation called the Caoinean, or Irish cry, as the funeral procession winds its way

* Vide Camden's Britannica.

† Vide Hibernia Dominicana, p. 8.

through hill and dale. It is a very ancient custom, and may be compared to that practised by the Jews. It is stated, that "to increase the sadness of these gloomy solemnities, women, whose trade it was to weep and make lamentation over the dead, were paid to offer this strange kind of consolation to the relations or connexions of the departed."*

In order that I might obtain the most accurate information on this practice, as it is observed at present by many of the native Irish, I visited a woman who is in the habit of attending funerals as a caoinier. The meaning of this word, she told me, is a rhyming woman. I found her very intelligent and communicative. She said she was always sent for as soon as the corpse was laid out. When she goes to the place she selects seven women whose voices are clear and loud, that they may all join in the caoine, with whom she practices beforehand. They all remain for two days and nights in the chamber of the dead: they call it waking the body. At intervals, four or five times in the night, they raise the caoine; and between those intervals the people amuse themselves in singing foolish songs, telling stories, and in various other trifling sports. The wake is generally held in a large room, to admit of a great concourse: all who come are welcome. The larger the assembly, it is considered the more honorable for the dead. A long table is spread with oaten cakes, rolls of butter, a keg of whiskey, pipes and tobacco, &c. Rich and poor of

* "Family of Bethany," translated by Rev. W. Mare.

all denominations are equally welcome to partake of the fare—to make any difference would be considered displeasing to God. The business of the rhymer is to repeat the virtues of the deceased, to enumerate his worldly advantages, and those of his kindred, living and dead ; the names of the mourners he has left, and their irreparable loss. The rhyme begins, “Ulloo-loo, O why did you die ? It was not for want of good living. You had plenty of potatoes and meal,” &c.

The criers chime in, with clapping of hands, in doleful cadence. Should the deceased have been a young girl, loved and admired, when committing the body to the ground, the rhyme goes—“O why did you die ? Only that it would be to war against Christ, the whole country would join in our ullaloo. You may take up your swords and fight ; you cannot bring her back ; for He who suffered for her, has her, and who but He has any right to her ? But, O why did you die ? If gold could have kept you here, not a shovel-full of clay would ever lie over you. Who ever received charity from your full hand, and looked back for more ? Did not they go on their way with a thankful heart ? O then, why did you die ?”

This is the identical English translation that our informant gave of her own Irish composition, which must, in the native language, have been much more eloquent and expressive. She related an instance of a farmer's wife who died in her confinement. Her husband had three small farms in different townlands. The names of these were mentioned by the rhymer, who said they were all waiting on her, yet she

must die for an infant child, and be left with nothing but her shroud. In this account, she seemed at a loss for words in English to express her full meaning, and I found it difficult to understand any part of it until she had often repeated it. She told me that when a rhyming woman gives satisfaction, she is sent for from a distance of ten miles, by persons of whom she knows nothing; in which case she is taken aside by the nearest relative of the deceased, to be instructed in the subjects of her lamentation. She is desired 'neither to boast nor brag,' but to bewail the loss to the parents, brothers, sisters, husband, children, &c. Sometimes the lamentation is so pathetic that the harrowed-up feelings of the survivors can bear no more, and the strain is silenced.

The caoine is kept up while the funeral procession is on the way to the place of interment. Three or four of the relatives, each carrying two bottles of whiskey, walk with the criers to refresh them occasionally with that cordial for every care. When the procession enters the burying ground, the caoine ceases while they walk three times round it, all the while repeating the creed. During the interment, the caoine is resumed; and when the grave is closed, all the people kneel round it to offer up prayer for the departed soul.*

The manner in which this ceremony was performed in time past is well described in the following account.

* This account was published some years ago in 'The Protestant Rector, a Tale of Other Times in Ireland,' by the Author of *Three Years in Italy*.

of the Irish cry, in *The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, by Miss Beaufort :

“The body of the deceased, dressed in grave-clothes, and ornamented with flowers and odoriferous herbs, was usually placed on a table or elevated place. The relations and the *caoiniers*, *i. e.* the persons who sung the funeral songs and lamentations, ranged themselves in two divisions, one at the head, and the other at the feet of the corpse.

“The *bards* and *croteries*, *i. e.* those who composed the songs and related the genealogy, &c. of the deceased, having before prepared the funeral caoinian, the chief bard of the *head chorus* began, by singing the first stanza in a *low doleful tone*, which was softly accompanied by the harp ; at the conclusion the *last semi-chorus* began the lamentation, or *ullaloo*, from the final note of the preceding stanza, in which they were answered by the *head semi-chorus*, and then both united in one *general chorus*.

“The chorus of the first stanza being ended, the *chief bard* of the first semi-chorus sung the second stanza, the *strain* of which was taken from the concluding note of the preceding chorus ; which being ended, the *head semi-chorus* began the *gol*, or *lamentations*, in which they were answered by that of the *foot* ; and then, as before, both united in the general full chorus. And thus alternately were the *song* and *chorusses* performed during the night.

“The genealogy, rank, possessions, virtues, and vices of the deceased were rehearsed ; and a number of interrogatories were addressed to the *dead person*,

as “Why did he die?” If married, “Whether his wife was faithful to him: his sons dutiful, and good warriors?” If a *matron*, “Whether her daughters were fair or chaste?” If a *young man*, “Whether he had been crossed in love?” or, “If the blue-eyed maids of Erin treated him with scorn,” &c.

“Each versicle of the *caoinian* consists only of *four feet*, and each foot was commonly of two *syllables*; the *three* first required no correspondence, but the *fourth* was to correspond with the terminations of the other versicles.”*

This custom is now falling into disuse, the priests being opposed to it.

“In former times each great Milesian clan had its peculiar *caoinan*, or death-cry. General Vallancey thinks the custom may be traced to the remotest antiquity, and asserts that David’s lamentation for Jonathan, and the *conclamatis* over the Phœnician Dido, as described by Virgil, coincide with the *caoinan*. Dr. Campbell is also of opinion, that the word *ululate* or *hullaloo*, the choral burden of the *caoinan*, and the Greek word of the same import, have a strong affinity to each other.”

* The rhymes are always in the Irish language. In the Appendix will be found some literal translations from that language, with which the writer has been favoured by a friend.

CHAPTER X.

ANCIENT IRISH HABITATIONS.

THERE are numerous remains found throughout this kingdom of motes and caverns, supposed to have been the habitations of persons in the different ranks of society. A high mount of earth stands conspicuous on many a rising ground, and points out the rath or hill Fortress, where some Irish king or chieftan retained his followers.

There have been also many caverns and subterraneous passages, divided into apartments, having the walls, roofs, and floors lined with flags, discovered in various parts of the country.

There are ancient earthen works or mounds still existing on the Curragh of Kildare. The larger rath, it is conjectured, may have been the dwelling-place of the chieftains, the smaller entrenchments their burial place. In Ptolemy's Geography a number of Irish cities are mentioned, and some of them he calls illustrious.

The regal palaces of Tara and Emania must have been of a superior construction, but there is no record found which enables us to form any opinion of their architectural merits.

Rath signifies, in the Gaelic, originally a plain or cleared spot, also a surety. Some of them include within their entrenchment, from ten to twenty acres of ground. The Celtic inhabitants of the British isles, like the Irish, cleared a space for their habitations, and the erection of these fortresses, whose remains are found in different parts of England, has been ascribed to those ancient people called Celts, or Belgæ, who, according to the opinion of antiquarians, taught the early Britons the art of constructing earthen fortifications; regular sets of apartments connected by narrow and difficult passages, with a sloping descent, have been discovered under some of these fortresses. An entrance can sometimes be traced, but in many of them no passage is found to the interior. On the most extensive of these raths, there are some vestiges of buildings. Decayed bones, (chiefly of the ox) are found, and on turning up the ground, great quantities of charcoal have been discovered.

The ancient name of Cloyne was *Cluaine-uamhack*, which signifies “the retreat of the caves.” A proper designation, as is evident from the vast number of extensive caves discovered in this neighbourhood.

Here also stands a fine specimen of the ancient round tower, 102 feet high. It is divided into six stories, the first of which is eleven and a half feet from the ground, at which height is the door—the distance between each floor is the same, eleven and a half feet.

In this neighbourhood, near Castlemartyr,* a curious discovery was made, some time ago by a quarryman. His crow-bar had fallen into a fissure of the rock, and in his endeavours to recover it, he opened the way into a cavern, in which lay a human skeleton, partly covered with thin plates of stamped or embossed gold, fastened together by wire. He also found near the skeleton, several amber beads, which had probably fallen from the richly decorated covering which had been placed on the body.

Mr. Lecky, of Cork, procured one of the plates, but the remainder of the gold was sold and melted in that city and Youghal, and the jeweller who was the chief purchaser, told Mr. Crofton Croker that there had been found rather more than the contents of half a coal box."

Similar discoveries have been made in other places in Ireland. A blacksmith named Supple, is reported to have had a dream which induced him to dig for treasure round Ballybeg abbey; after much laborious exertion he was rewarded for his pains and toil by the discovery of a stone coffin, which contained a skeleton, with a cross and chains of gold, and also a thin plate of gold, stamped with the representation of the crucifixion. These he carried off and sold to a goldsmith at Cork, who not valuing them for their antiquity,

* The ancient name of Castle Martyr was Leper's-town. This village was the site of several hospitals, for the reception of lepers, under the direction of the Monks of St. Augustine; which being deserted on the disappearance of the disease, fell into ruins. It is said that the whole province of Munster, in ancient times, had been grievously afflicted with leprosy.

melted them down in the crucible, and the coffin was found converted into a pig-trough, at the door of a cabin near the abbey. This account was given by the son of the man who discovered the treasure, on the very spot where it had been found.

The state to which the Irish were reduced by the ravages of their overpowering enemy may be compared to that of the Israelites, when "the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian : and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds."—Judges, vi. 1, 2, &c. History, as well as the vestiges which still remain, afford us many records of the extremities to which the Irish were driven by their invaders.

The habitations of the ancient Irish, at this early period, some of which resemble those of the lower classes at the present day, are thus described :

From the remotest periods to the close of the middle ages, the ancient Irish inhabited three descriptions of dwelling places, that is, the hut, den, and palace.

The hut, by the natives denominated *both* and *caban*, was the summer habitation of the lower ranks, while tending their flocks and herds, or waiting for the in-gathering of the crops. They were constructed of the branches of trees, fixed in the ground, in a circular or oblong figure, tied with withes at the top, and covered with leaves and grass.* In these huts

* Keating, MS. Moryson's Travels.

the family laid them down to sleep promiscuously, on heath or grass. In the winter these fragile dwellings were exchanged for others more solid.

These were the dens in which all ranks of the ancient Irish sheltered themselves from the inclement weather. They were denominated *daingean*, or securities, and *creas talmhan*, or earthy habitations, which they literally were, being subterraneous retreats, after the manner of the ancient Britons and Germans, and indeed of most other nations of remote antiquity. For, says Tacitus, the Germans dig deep caves in the ground, and cover them with earth, where they lay up their provisions, and wherein they dwell during winter, for the sake of warmth; in these they also retire from their enemies, who plunder the open country, but cannot discover their secret retreats; * and the sutterans or earth-holes of the Irish of the ninth century, are described in the Icelandic annals:—
“ Leifr went on piracy towards the west, and infested Ireland with his arms, and there discovered large subterraneous caves, the entrances of which were dark and dismal, but on entering, they saw the glittering of the swords which the men held in their hands. These men they slew, but brought their swords, with much other riches, away.†

These caves were also used as granaries and places of retreat long after the arrival of the English in this island.‡ Numbers have been discovered, from

* Antiq. Celto Scand. p. 14.

† Tacit de Morib. Germ. c. 16.

‡ Cambren. Litt. Hist. Henry II.

time to time, in various parts of the kingdom. They are of different constructions and magnitudes. Some consist only of single apartments, either dug in the earth, or formed of stone. Others consist of a number of different rooms, communicating with each other by means of narrow entrances, closed by stone doors. In these subterraneous apartments have been found wells of water, fire-places, and evident traces of lamps; convincing proofs of their having been habitations for the living, as they seem, in several instances, receptacles for the dead, as numbers of human skeletons have been found in some. They were situated near the palaces and castles of the chiefs, and not unfrequently under them. Those hitherto discovered are those of Aghabulloge, Roscarberry, Killossy, Killough, Caragh, Slane, Slieve Donard, &c.*

The lower orders of the people, on the approach of winter, having buried their corn and provisions in these caverns, retreated, with their flocks and herds, into thick woods, there securing their charge with wattled fences, they dug for themselves pits, ten or twelve feet deep, covering them with branches, fern, and leaves; in which they dwelt until returning spring, enveloped in dirt and smoke, as is evinced from their remains which have been discovered in various places throughout the island.

As civilization advanced, they improved their summer residences; subsequently to the first mentioned

* Smith's Hist. of Cork, vol. ii., and of Waterford. Harris's Down, &c. Leland's Hist. of Ireland. Ledwich's Irish Antiq. p. 322.

simple constructions, they erected more durable habitations made of sods, turf and earth, thatched with straw, of an oblong form. In this state they remained for some centuries, without either chimneys or windows; the door, or entrance, serving for the double purpose of the admission of light, and emission of smoke. With the addition of a chimney and a few inlets for light, or small windows, the habitations of the poorer Irish peasantry are unchanged to this day. In some very remote parts, the shepherds and herdsmen still retain their wattled hovels during the summer season."

"The palace was the residence of the chiefs and persons of rank, denominated by the Irish, *lios*, *lis*, and *dunlios*, that is, inclosure; also *coinbail*, or the habitation of the chief. They consisted of areas, inclosed by a ditch and mound of earth, empaled at the top by a wattled hedge, or row of bushes, generally of a circular form, but often in irregular figures, as circumstances might admit; and situated in the bosom of woods, verge of bogs, brinks of rivers, and places of difficult access. Within these inclosures were several detached buildings constructed of wood and wicker-work, and the roofs thatched with straw or fern. Such were the palaces of the Irish, and such were those of the ancient Welch and British kings."

According to the Irish antiquaries, the royal palace of Tarah consisted of eight separate buildings, constructed of wood: one in the centre of the court, on that account called *teach miodh cuharta*, in which resided the chief. This was surrounded by four others

for the reception of strangers; for state prisoners; for the bards, and for the women.* Here we have no mention made of kitchens, stables, dog-house, or granaries; which were probably situated outside the inclosure, as is, in a great measure, confirmed from several Irish poems, Brehon laws," &c.

"What improvements the Irish made in their edifices during their commerce with the Danes, we have no just information. The Danish buildings in general were not very dissimilar from those of the more ancient inhabitants, and like them were also constructed of wood, though somewhat in a better style. In Ireland these people erected few edifices besides those appertaining to their towns and forts. Their towns were inclosed by stone walls, but their houses were of wood, mean and low, in which state they remained, even in Dublin, to the close of the sixteenth century."†

"The *dun*, *dunadh* or *duna*, were isolated hills, rocks, and other elevated places, secured by walls and entrenchments of rough stones, without cement, or mounds of earth, of a square or circular form, as those of Down, Dunnamaes, Dunclapokre, &c. The name of *dun* was also given by the Irish to any entrenchment, whose area within was raised high in order to annoy an enemy more advantageously.

The *ban* or *babhan*, from the Tuetonic *bowen*, to construct and secure with trees, were areas inclosed

* Keating's MS. O'Connor's Dissert. 1st ed. p. 136.

† Harris's Hist. of Dublin, p. 74. Moryson's Travels. Littleton's Hist. of Hen. II.

with thick ditches of earth, square or circular, impaled with wooden stakes, or the branches of trees, and surrounded with a deep trench. Numerous remains of both these species of fortresses are found in various parts of the kingdom, as also in Britain, Germany, Sweden, and in almost every country in Europe.

The Irish also, on their military expeditions, had other species of fortifications, for the security of their camps and the routs of their armies, that is the *baghail* or *pagh mulleum*, and the *glath*. The *baghail* was an inclosure constructed of the branches of trees which surrounded and secured their camps.* The *glaith*, *gleidh* or *ingluidh*, were entrenchments with hedges upon them, thrown across roads, passes of rivers, entrances of woods, &c., in order to obstruct the progress of an enemy.†

From the Brehon laws it appears, that every chief was obliged to find timber and wood proper for the construction of the several species of fortresses. The large kind of these old Irish fortifications were denominated *casthair*, or cities, and were the same as the ancient Britons. They were generally situated in the midst of woods, or on elevated places, being large circular inclosures, consisting of the following component parts—the *beallagh*, *dun*, *mote*, *ban*, *rath*, *uagh*, &c.

The *beallagh* was the outward circular inclosure, which answered to the outward ballium or vallam of

* Ledwich's Antiquities, p. 185, &c. O'Conor's Dissert. Loyd's Dict.

† Brehon Laws, MS. Ledwich's Irish Ant.

the Norman castles. With the Irish it generally was constructed of a staked hedge or fence of wood ; sometimes with, but generally without an entrenchment. Within this inclosure resided the servants and domestic animals belonging to the chief.

The *dun* was situated within the area of the beal-lagh, and generally on an elevated part ; was the immediate habitation of the chief and his family, and answered to the keep or dungeon of the Norman castles.

The *mote*, or *mothar*, was the entrenchment which encircled the dun ; whence *mothar*, in modern Irish, signifies an inclosed park, and *mota* a mound.

The *ban* was the rampart, which inclosed the dun, and generally situated with the mote.

The *rath* was the court or open area within the ban, wherein the *pilait* or *righlann*, or royal palace was situated, and consisted of several detached buildings, as before observed, in the civil architecture.

The *uagh*, or *uaigh*, was the cave or cellar where the provisions were kept, or where they retired in case of danger. Such was the general construction of the ancient Irish cities, and such were those of the Britons on the arrival of the Romans.

The Danes and other northern nations who arrived in this island, from the beginning of the eighth to the close of the eleventh century, had several methods of fortification, some of which were unknown to the more ancient inhabitants. They secured their towns by stone and earthen walls, and erected in convenient places strong castles of lime and stone. Their tem-

porary forts, indeed, much resembled those of the Irish, being round entrenchments on elevated grounds, and secured either by wattled hedges, or rough stone walls, and denominated by Cambrensis, *fossata* ; but by the native Irish, *neidh* or nests, from their rotundine figure and elevated situation. The castles distinguished by the name of *castilla murata*, were of lime and stone, generally round, and situated in, or near towns. Numerous remains of both these species of Danish military stations, are still visible in various parts of the kingdom.”*

* Ledwich in Coll. Reb. Hib.

CHAPTER XI.

Records of Irish history found in Iceland—Newfoundland discovered by the Danes, in conjunction with Irishmen—Niall “of the three showers”—Niall lays his crown aside, and retires to Iona—Tomb of the Irish kings—Aidus, the chief monarch—Incursions of the Northmen—Their devastations in Iona, &c.—The monastery of Columbkille set on fire, and its inmates murdered—Churches in Ireland destroyed by these enemies to Christianity—The Danes repelled by the native Irish in 810 and 812—Dissensions between the provincial kings—Parade of the kings of Munster—Feidlim Mac Crimthan—Landing of Turgesius and his Danish troops—Destruction of seminaries and all religious institutions—Termination of the despotic reign of Turgesius—Niall III. drowned in the river Callan—Arrival of fresh troops from the shores of the Baltic—The monarch Malachy unites his forces to those of the Danes—John Erigana.

It has never yet been ascertained at what period of time the northern nations first became acquainted with our island. It would appear, that before the Christian era there had been numerous arrivals, some of whom were hostile, others friendly. That the Irish themselves were great rovers is sufficiently ascertained. The extraordinary fact, that the chief records of Irish history were found in Iceland, distant and inaccessible as that island must have been for the inexperienced

navigators of those early ages, clearly prove the intercourse between the people of these countries. Of this we have the following detail in the *Anthologia Hibernica* :—

“Before the Northmen inhabited Iceland, there were men whom the Norwegians called Papas ;* they were Christians and roving men, wafted over the western sea. There were found after them Irish books, bells, pastoral staffs, and other things, which indicated them Westmen.† These things were also found in Papey in the east, and in Papyli, with English books, which are said about that time to have been brought into the country by navigators.”

* Several learned persons have thought that the Papas were Christian priests, and that they did not inhabit Iceland, but that the articles belonging to them were brought into the country by the pirates, and deposited there as a place of safety. They are mentioned as a people well known to the Norwegians, and were evidently the same as the inhabitants of Papey and Papyli. These countries are said to lie in the east, that is, eastward of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, and the eastern coasts of the Baltic. These people early made maritime expeditions towards the west in the Atlantic Ocean, and were some of the first of the northern rovers who infested the British islands.

Whether or not they were Christians, is uncertain. If we believe the Irish chronicles and lives of saints, the missionaries from this country propagated the Christian faith in the fifth century in that isle ; and Claudian and others state, that it was probable that Iceland was peopled by those people about the commencement of the Christian era. They, however, seem not to have been numerous, and to have led a piratical life, and the Irish books and other articles, were the plunder obtained from Ireland, as were the English books, &c., that were carried into Finnland.

† *Vestmen* among the Norwegians, denoted the inhabitants of Britain, Ireland, Orkneys, Shetland, and all the adjacent isles.

“It is remarkable that few or none of the transactions relative to Ireland, and recorded in the Icelandic annals and northern sagas, are mentioned by the later Irish historians, though they notice circumstances said to have happened several centuries before the Christian era. The circumstance of the discovery of Newfoundland, and some other parts of North America, by the Danes, in conjunction with Irishmen, or the ancestors of Irishmen, might be thought to merit the attention of the Irish as well as northern historians. For Rafu of Limerick, if he was not an aboriginal native, was born in the island, or had been a long time settled there, and most probably had some aboriginals with him in his western expedition. The truth is, the most ancient Irish poems and chronicles do mention such things; but being written in an almost obscure and obsolete language, the more modern antiquaries and historians not understanding them, have substituted a romantic and ideal history and antiquities in their place. Keating, indeed, has collected a great number of notices relative to the connection subsisting between the Irish, Danes, Norwegians, and other northern nations; but having a strong bias towards remote antiquity, has thrown them into such early periods, as totally to disguise the truth and exceed all belief: however, with all his faults, he may justly be styled the father of Irish history, and in respect to some modern compilations, an authentic historian.”

“The Icelandic word *fostre*, signifies to nurse or bring up; whence we see it was an established cus-

tom among the northern nations, as among the Irish, to give their children to other families to bring up."

"*Fostbroder* or *Fastbrother*, in Icelandic, sworn brother. It was a custom among all the northern nations, for young men to bind themselves by an oath to protect and stand by each other, till death, in all cases. These were called fast or sworn brothers. A tie frequently stronger than nature."

We now again resume the thread of our narrative, if, indeed, a thread can be unravelled from the deeply entangled maze of Ireland's early history.

In the year 784, we find, as the reigning monarch, Niall, surnamed "of the three showers," which are said to have fallen in different parts of the kingdom, either on the night of his birth, or during his reign. The first was a shower of honey—the second of silver—the third of blood. The one of silver is alone explained, which is said to have been the twelve-grain penny pieces; to which Mac Curtin adds, "We have some of the same yet in the kingdom." At this time a grievous famine prevailed all over the country, and carried off many of its inhabitants. This is the third record that we have of such calamitous visitation.

After this, Niall the king laid his crown aside, and retired to Iona, where, in penitence and prayer, he passed the remnant of his days, and was buried in the island, in the same grave with three of his predecessors. This tomb is thus described in Monro's *Western Isles*,—"The tomb on the southe syde foresaid, has this inscription—*Tumulus Regnum Hybernix*, that is, the tomb of the Irland kinges; for we have in our

auld Erische cronikells, ther wer foure Irland kinges eirdit in the said tombe.”

In 795, Aidus, Ædan, the son of Niall Trassach, reigned over Ireland, the chief monarch. His reign was long, and rendered disastrous in consequence of the incursions of the Northmen, who effected a landing on the north-west coast. Twice before this period they had carried their devastations into the peaceful little island of Iona, and their implacable enmity to Christianity had led them to set fire to the monastery of Columbkille, and butcher as many of its inmates as came within their reach. The other little islands of the seas met with similar treatment. All were plundered, and laid waste with savage barbarity.

On former occasions the Irish had repelled them, but they were now overpowered by increasing numbers, and the country became a prey to their ravages. The churches were ransacked, plundered, and levelled to the ground. This, for some time, they could not resist; but at length the natives were roused to action, and in two successful engagements the enemy was driven back; and by indefatigable exertion the demolished churches and seminaries were rebuilt, and being wooden erections, the task was more easily effected; for at that early period, solid edifices of stone and lime were probably unknown in this country.

Again, in the years 810 and 812, the natives successfully opposed their invaders in the field of battle, and drove them from their coasts with considerable loss of their forces. Often were they thus repelled; but Ireland's pleasant places were too attractive to be

given up by a rapacious race, who were determined to possess them ; and each time that the formidable enemy was driven out, they again returned with additional forces.

Hatred of the Christians and of their religion, seemed to have given an impetus to their assailants, who were, however, under the stronger influence of avarice. They saw the Irish in the possession of riches and other advantages, which they coveted, and were resolved on acquiring for themselves. All they grasped for was but a fleeting shadow, in comparison with the substance which the Irish had attained. Religion, the true religion of the Gospel, was the only enduring, substantial riches, and if the Irish had faithfully flocked round the standard of the cross, they never would have been forsaken ; the Captain of their salvation would have fought their battles, and have given them the victory. But alas ! how often is the land visited because of the wickedness which is found therein, and how rarely do we find the scripture verified—"when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isaiah xxvi. 9.

The provincial kings, instead of uniting in a body to rid themselves of the enemy's encroachments, harassed each other with continual dissensions, and hence the country groaned under a rod of iron. Of this period Abbé Mac Geoghegan, in his *Histoire d'Irlande* says, "Pendant qu'une partie de ce peuple se consacroit entierment a Dieu par un rénoncement parfait au monde, et servoit en cela de modèle aux na-

tions voisines, l'esprit de discorde fût toujours nourri chez eux—they étoient toujours armés les uns contres les autres, sans que l'évangile qu'ils venoient de recevoir avec tant de respect eût pu corriger cet esprit de discorde, qui fut cause de tant désordres."

An account is transmitted to us of the costly parade and munificence of the kings of Munster, in their travels throughout the kingdom, which exceed all credibility. One name is especially mentioned. Feidlim Mac Crimthan, king of Cashel, an ambitious prince, whose object was to obtain sovereign rule, and for that end he sacrificed every other consideration. His own territories comprehended the entire range of the southern part of Ireland, which alternately devolved to the Eugénian and Dalcassian princes. But Feidlim not content with the half of the kingdom, entered into an unholy alliance with the Danes to possess himself of the whole, and even aided them in their sacrilegious destruction of churches, seminaries, &c. &c., while they in return obtained for him, by dint of warfare, the monarchy he sought after. But dear was the sacrifice, and short the triumph. It is said, that during the devastation of the Abbey of St. Ciarnan, he received a wound from which he never recovered. Towards the close of his life he became a penitent, and sought, in solitude, pardon for his sins, and peace with God.

Early in the ninth century, Ireland's formidable foe, Turgesius and his Danish troops, landed on the northern coast, and spread desolation wherever they appeared. By means of re-inforcements pouring in,

Turgesius extended his conquests throughout the kingdom, over which, for thirty years, he reigned with despotic sway. In all parts of the country the inhabitants were driven from the tenements of their forefathers, which became settlements for the invaders, who built strong forts all over the island.

This was a period of unparalleled devastation massacre, and plunder. The poor Irish resisted ; but the Danes conquered by means of overpowering numbers, and many a venerated structure became a prey to the devouring flames which those pagan troops kindled. The monastery of Banchor, famous for its learning and piety, was thus destroyed, and its nine hundred peaceable inmates slaughtered by them. This had been the seminary of two remarkable men—St. Columba, and the heresiarch, Pelagius.

Armagh, Kildare, Mayo, Iniscattery in the mouth of the Shannon, the Scelig isles, on the coast of Kerry ; the cells of St. Kevin in the valley of Glendalough, &c. &c., shared the same fate. These were indeed, Ireland's disastrous days—the slavery and degradation of her free-born sons were lamentable. Her fertile plains were laid in ashes. No discrimination was made between princes, nobles, priests, or people ; all whose lives were spared, were compelled to submit to the same degrading yoke, and thousands who concealed themselves in the woods and mountain fastnesses, perished there.

Every barony had a Danish king ; every *Tuath*, or

seignory, a Danish chieftain ; every church a heathen priest ; every town a Danish commanding officer ; and every private house a soldier lording it over the lawful proprietor.

The *Buanna*, (which name was given by the Irish to these common soldiers), exercised tyrannical authority over the inhabitants of each house in which he was quartered ; no provisions were permitted to be used by the family until after he had been served with such as he had preferred, nor were any clothes to be worn but such as he had rejected. If any dared to resist his will, the master of the house was seized, carried off, bound in fetters, and retained a prisoner in the next Danish Rath, until all the exorbitant demands of the *Buanna* were satisfied.

All improvements in learning, &c. ceased. Not only were the schools closed, but private instruction in their own houses was prohibited to the people. Intercourse was totally forbidden with clergymen, learned men, philosophers, poets. Even that which the Irish had considered indispensable and most valuable, to have an antiquary to continue the family record, was denied. Artists and lawyers were no longer employed.

Kings, queens, princes, lords, and ladies, were equally prohibited from wearing or working in gold, silver, or silk. All feats of activity, and all entertainments, public or private, were forbidden. If a marriage took place, the young bride was seized and carried off. We have thus given a brief sketch of this cruel bondage which lay heavily on a people who

never willingly submitted to any yoke: but the time of their deliverance was at hand.

The account given of the termination of the despotic reign of Turgesius, is found in most of the histories of Ireland, and in substance is as follows:—O'Melachlin, king of Meath, had a beautiful daughter whom Turgesius demanded of her father. The king consented upon condition that her maids should attend her. A time was appointed for their arrival at the tyrant's Rath, where he and a number of young Danish noblemen received them. The supposed damsels were vigorous youths, well armed, under the disguise of female attire. They instantly fell upon Turgesius and his party wholly unprepared for such an attack, and in the consternation that ensued, the king of Meath rushed in with an armed band, and Turgesius with his companions were slain. The death of Turgesius spread a panic among his followers; all were routed in every quarter; and the Danes who escaped the *skeyne** or the sword, took refuge in their ships, and returned to Norway and the isles from whence they came. In the year 848, the following record is found, "Scoti super Northmannæes irruentes, auxilio Dei victores, eos a suis finibus expellunt."†

In the Irish books of annals it is stated, that Turgesius was drowned in Loch Var by the king of Meath, or in Lake Annin in Meath. The monarch,

* *Skeyne*—Irish knife.

† Hist. Franc et Norman, Script. Antiq.

Niall III, adopted vigorous measures for expelling the Danes from their strong holds in Ulster ; and after several conflicts and one decisive battle, he completely vanquished them. Their head-quarters were at Armagh. On his way thither the river Callan must be crossed. This was rendered hazardous in consequence of heavy rains which had swollen the river and burst its banks. Niall halted his troops at the foot of Tullachmore-hill : here he ordered one of the warriors to attempt a passage ; he obeyed, but the impetuous torrent dashed the rider from his horse. The king cried out to the guards to save him, but terror seemed to have paralysed them. This extremity excited the king to exertion. He spurred his horse to the brink of the river, which being undermined, gave way, and plunged him into the flood, where he sank to rise no more. This happened in the fifty-fifth year of his age. A little hillock, called “Niall’s Mound,” on the banks of the Callan, marked the spot where he closed his career—and even yet, human skulls, bones, brazen trumpets, &c., are dug up occasionally in its vicinity, bearing testimony to its having been the field of battle.

To this monarch, O’Melachlin, or Malachy, king of Meath, succeeded. He commenced his reign well, but did not long follow the good course with which he set out. The Danes, though dispersed and weakened, were not exterminated : numbers still remained, and only waited the arrival of a re-inforcement from the shores of the Baltic to renew their attacks on the natives. Three days of an easterly wind were suffi-

cient to bring the desired succour in the year 849. Unfortunately this happened at a time when dissensions among the Irish princes were sharp and inveterate. In this degrading warfare, all their former sufferings from Danish tyranny seemed forgotten or counterbalanced in their desire of revenge and plundering each other. The detail is too tedious and disastrous to dwell upon; suffice it to say, that Melachlin, who had sent ambassadors to the court of France to signify his intention to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy City, in grateful acknowledgment of his deliverance from the Danes, now joined their forces and obtained a victory over his own countrymen, and his example was followed by others.

But even now in this dark page of Ireland's history, the Lord did not leave himself without witnesses. The name of Johannes Erigena is familiar to most of our readers. About the year 860, he translated from the Greek four treatises of Dionysius, styled the Areopagite. Amidst the scholars of his day he seems to have been conspicuous. It is supposed he visited Athens, and spent many years in studying the Arabic and Chaldee, into which languages and also Latin, he translated the works of Aristotle. He was nevertheless denominated "Vir barbarus" by Anastatious, the librarian of the Vatican, who expressed his surprise in a letter to Charles, that "placed in the very ends of the world, so remote from the conversation of men as was this Irish John, that he had intellect to comprehend and transfuse such things so ably into another language." Thus illiberal, ignorant, and confined

were the opinions expressed in those ancient times of the Irish. Such indeed still exist, to the criminal neglect of a people possessed of the finest natural capacity.

Erigena, or Irish John, and Dungal, who were the correspondents of Alcuine, are mentioned by name as being among the Irish scholars who took refuge in France. Many of the good and learned must at this time have been compelled to seek repose in distant lands when the foreign foe invaded their resting places, and brought havoc and desolation upon their seminaries.

In the life of St. Chrysostom, the Greek father, it is recorded that "certain clergymen, who dwelt in the isles of the ocean," repaired from the utmost borders of the habitable world to Constantinople, between the years 842 and 847, when Methudius was Patriarch there, to inquire of certain ecclesiastical traditions, and the perfect and exact computation of Easter. "These islanders were most probably Irish, who were thus tenacious of their traditional customs, and so lively, even at this late period, their veneration for that church from which they confessedly received them." There are found in several parts of the writings of St. Chrysostom, mention made of the "*British isles* as having churches established, and altars erected."*

"The portentous doctrine of transubstantiation was formally avowed by the church of Rome." "Jo-

* See Ware's *Writers of Ireland*. Mosheim, Cent. 9, and Dupin's *Eccles. Hist.*

hannes Erigena, in opposition to the spiritual sense of Rome, clearly demonstrated that the sacraments of the altar were not to be esteemed the real body and blood of Christ, but only a commemoration of them.”

Of the same John of Ireland, it is said in a letter from Pope Nicholas to Charles II. of France, which you will find in Spotswood’s Church History :—“One John, of the Scot’s nation, has translated the work of Dionysius the Areopagite, which should have been sent to me, and approved of by my judgment, especially as said John, though a man of excellent learning, is suspected not to be orthodox ; for which reason your majesty will be pleased to send both the book and its author to Rome.”

“ John of Erigena is described by the author of the life of King Alfred, as a man highly celebrated for wit, acuteness of understanding, and uncommon knowledge in the sciences and languages known in that age, particularly for an extraordinary acquaintance with the Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic tongues. He was the intimate friend and companion of Charles the Bald, of France, so long as the court of Rome permitted that prince to be the protector of wit and learning ; and to him the celebrated King Alfred, the preserver of his country, the reviver of English literature, and reputed father of the University of Oxford, is said to have been indebted for his liberal and uncommon education.” *Ælfrida Magni vita*, lib. 2., page 99, &c. *A Job*, *Spelman Oxonii*. Also *Hoyden’s Annals*.

“Erigena was obliged to fly from the court of France, which could not protect him from Papal persecution to his native island, the safe asylum from Roman tyranny, where he died in the year 874.”*

“Numberless other instances might be adduced as evidences of the spiritual independence of Ireland, and the apostolical simplicity of its religion, antecedent to the tenth century.”

“At the unhallowed close of the ninth century, when the bloody weapons of barbarian invaders had effectually supported the spiritual arms of Rome, and spread universal ruin and distress over the land: when public seminaries were overthrown, their peaceable inhabitants butchered, and learning and religion in an instant extinguished; the people of this unhappy island, rapidly hurried from meridian splendour into the darkness of midnight, experienced a degree of ignorance and misery far surpassing even the wretchedness of savage life.”

Sir James Ware dates the general spoliation of Ireland by the Danes and Normans as having been perpetrated in the year 795. The destruction of churches, seminaries, and all useful institutions, was followed by a recklessness of the good order and discipline which had hitherto been maintained in Ireland.

Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History of the eighth

* See Dupin's Eccles. Hist. Cent. 9.

century, says, "That the Irish were lovers of learning; that they distinguished themselves in these times of ignorance, by the culture of the sciences, beyond all the European nations; travelling through the most distant lands with a view to improve and to communicate their knowledge, is a fact which is derived from the most authentic records of antiquity."

CHAPTER XII.

Round Towers—General description of them—No authentic record of their origin—Their antiquity—Adam Clarke's description of the Tower at Antrim—Tower of St. Canice Tower on the Rock of Cashel—Stone-roofed structures found in their vicinity—Devenish Tower—Similar Towers in Hindostan—Eastern origin of the Irish traced from the ruins of the Seven Churches and the Round Towers—Caucasus, the country of the Iberians, abounds in Round Towers—Investigation of Ardmore Tower, Cloyne Tower, and several others—Perfection of the architecture—The forms of the Towers vary in a few instances—All built of freestone and fine mortar—Farther notice of their great antiquity—Ludicrous legend—Round Tower of Cloyne struck by lightning in 1749.

THE round towers of Ireland being a subject of deep interest, and one which has been long investigated by the learned antiquaries of other nations as well as our own, we have collected together the opinions of several writers for the information of our young readers. There are many traditions concerning them, but no authentic record of the time when, or the persons by whom they were erected. But two specimens of these ancient buildings, exactly similar, can be found in any part of Europe, and these are in Scotland.

The round towers are invariably found of the same

tapering form, on an average about an hundred feet in height when in a perfect state. The diameter at the bottom varies between eight and fifteen feet ; the door from ten to twelve feet above the ground. Several of them appear to have three or four floors, with a small window in each division ; and in most of these buildings there are four small windows, corresponding to the cardinal points, close under the eap. Two only, have six windows in this position. There is a striking peculiarity in the tower at Brechin, in Scotland ; its upper part is observed to bend backward and forward during high winds.

Many persons believe them to be of Christian origin ; it is, however, observed by a recent writer, that they are “unlike any structure in use by the Christian clergy of any other country. It is most unlikely that this peculiar form of building would be invented by the missionaries who Christianized Ireland and Scotland ; for, if such-had been the case, we might have expected that some of the holy men of Ireland, who became distinguished on the continent, would have transferred the same form of building thither, which in no instance have they done. Three of the towers, it is true, namely, Donaghmore, Antrim, and Brechin, have Christian emblems on the doorways ; but in two instances these have been shown to be modern. ‘It is certain that the early ecclesiastics, in appropriating to themselves the old pagan places of worship every where, took care, very generally, to impose emblems of their religion on the converted structures.’ Supposing, then, that the round tower was not an inven-

tion of the Irish missionaries, we are forced to presume for them an origin in some earlier heathen system, and perhaps a different race."

"If the round towers were of Christian origin at all, it is incomprehensible that the history of the early priesthood of Ireland says so little about them, and does not speak of the building of a single individual of the number."

The annals of the Four Masters, at 898, mention Turaghan Ancoire, (the Five Tower of the Anchorite), at Inniscailtre, or Holy Island; and the same annals, at 996 state, that lightning destroyed Armagh, sparing neither the infirmaries, the cathedral, the *Erdam*, nor the *Fedneamead*. The towers are described as being narrow and high; also round, after the custom of the country. Of the erection of churches we have abundant mention in the annals, whilst of the towers there are none more than are here given, and in the following quotation.

The following passage, which through the kindness of a friend, the author has had carefully compared with the original work cited, now in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, may be adduced as strongly corroborating the opinion of their earlier origin:—

"Anno 448. Ingenti terremotu per loca varia imminente plurime urbes auguste muri recenti adhuc reedificatione constructi cum lvii turribus corruerunt."—*Ulster Annals*, as in O'Connor's *rerum Hibernicarum Scriptures*, vol. iv. page 2. Lib. T.C.D. Class v.

This passage, as far as the barbarous nature of the language, not here only, but as will presently appear,

throughout the entire book, may be thus translated—
“In the year 448, many fine cities but recently rebuilt, *together with fifty-seven towers*, were totally prostrated by the shock of a great earthquake, the alarming effects of which were felt in numerous places.”

Referring to the language and style in which these remarkable “Ulster Annals” are written. O’Connor observes, vol. i., “The work is written in Irish characters, very clearly, but, as is usual in Irish works, abounding with so many abbreviations both of words and syllables, that it cannot be read without harassing labour.

“Circumstances are narrated in a barbarous style, partly Irish and partly Latin; so, however, that what refers especially to Ireland, from the commencement of the ninth century, are told in Irish, while other matters are described in Latin; but in both languages the detail is so mixed up, that often not only under the same year, but even in the same line, it exhibits alternate sentences, now in Irish and again in Latin.

“Many codices of the ancient writers of manuscripts still exist, *written* with elegance, but of the most execrable spelling. Hundreds of times the letters ‘e’ and ‘t’ occur for ‘i’ and ‘d,’ and vice versâ; also ‘f’ is written for ‘v,’ and ‘u’ for ‘v,’ and vice versâ.”

The following extract from the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke’s Journal, describes the round tower at Antrim, and gives the author’s opinion as to the object for which such buildings were erected:—

“Having observed one of those buildings called

round towers, on the left, as I entered *Antrim*, last evening I went this morning to examine it. It stands in the garden of a Mr. Clarke, who kindly permitted us to examine it, and furnished us with a ladder to ascend to the first story.

“ This tower is between fifteen and sixteen feet in diameter ; but in the inside clear it is only nine feet. Mr. Clarke told us it was about ninety feet high. On the north it has a door about five feet high and two wide, and this appears to have been the chief entrance, and is about nine feet from the ground : we entered this by means of a ladder. On the south side there are three of these doors, but the lowest is at least thirty feet from the ground. At the top, just under its pyramidical finishing, it has four of these doors or openings, placed very nearly, as I found by my compass, to the four cardinal points of the heavens. None of these openings are arched—they are all finished with horizontal stones ; and across the lower one, that only to which we had access, a piece of oak timber is laid by way of lintel, and this oak, though a very little decayed on the outside, is yet perfectly sound, though it must have occupied its present situation for many centuries. This tower seems evidently never to have been raised by any scaffolding from without, but to have been built from the inside—overhand, as it is termed : the protuberances and inequalities of the outside structure sufficiently prove this. For about one-third of its height it seems to have been built of an equal thickness ; but after this, it tapers gradually, though very little, for its top appears

but a trifle smaller than its base in diameter. There is no church near it, nor any vestige of any religious building of any kind ; but Mr. C. informed me, that human bones, teeth, &c., are frequently dug up in the adjoining grounds ; hence it is evident there had been a burying-place here, and consequently a church, or some religious house, though long since demolished. Tradition says, that *Antrim* stood anciently on the north of this tower : it is now a mile off on the south side.

“ Two opinions have been formed in reference to these towers. The first is, that they were watch-towers ; secondly, that they were belfries. First, that they were not watch-towers is evident ; because they are situated on the low lands, though there are eminences and hills near at hand on which they might have been placed, had they been designed to serve this purpose. Secondly, it appears unlikely that they should have served for belfries ; as they have not apertures sufficient to let out sound, and are made perfectly close at the top. What then were they ? I shall state a fact, and then draw inferences from it.

“ I. Ireland received Christianity not from the west, but from the east ; of this fact there is the fullest evidence.

“ II. Bells were not used in ancient times in the Asiatic churches, nor are they to the present day.

“ III. Minarets, or little towers, were constructed, on the top of which, a person called out the watches of the night, &c., and gave notice of the time for

prayer. This is still the custom among the Mahomedans.

“IV. Possibly these towers served for this purpose. This conjecture may be supported by the following reasons. First, these round towers are always situated in the most fertile parts of the country. 2. Always near some church, abbey, or religious house, proved by the bones, &c., found near them. 3. These churches were always erected in the most fertile part of the country for the sake of the fraternities and clergy attached to them. 4. All these fraternities, of whatsoever order, had their appointed times for prayer, to which they must be summoned by some proper means; as at other times they worked with their hands for the support of the institution. 5. If there were no bells, and it is reasonable to think that there were none in the nation, if indeed in Europe, at the era of the erection of these buildings, then a crier was necessary to give the time, and announce the hour of prayer. 6. The four windows, or apertures at the top, immediately under the roof, facing the four cardinal points of the heavens, probably served for the purpose of admitting the crier to announce from each, the watch of the night, or hour of prayer, that the people in all directions might have the information, and come together in the place and at the hour appointed to worship God. For this purpose alone, I suppose these towers to have been originally constructed.

“My attention was directed to a stone which rested above, and on the lintel of the door I mentioned,

which I had entered on going into examine the building in the inside, and which I was informed contained an hieroglyphic. On closely inspecting it, I found it contained a cross of rude workmanship. Five black holes are cut deeply into the stone, and probably were intended to represent the five wounds received by our blessed Lord at his crucifixion.”*

St. Canice’s round tower, in the county of Kilkenny, is perfect. It is described as “at least 100 feet high. The top has the remains of an embattled wall encircling the summit, and round it are four small square windows.”

Within two miles of Bray there is a fragment of a tower, about five feet high, which is called Rathmichael Round Tower, in which are deposited all the skulls from a neighbouring burial ground; from this circumstance it is called “the skull-hole.”

Kildare round tower seems to be the highest of all others in Ireland, being computed to be 132 feet in altitude. Its conical roof is gone, but has been repaired by the addition of an embattled parapet wall.

The round tower on the summit of the rock of Cashel, which tradition says was founded by Cormac, Bishop of Cashel and King of Munster, about the year 900. It has four windows with pointed arches at the top. The door, at a considerable distance from the ground, opens into a gallery, at the corner of the north transept of the ruined cathedral. Bell, in his prize essay, from which this account is taken, states that the style of

* Clarke’s Journal, p. 267.

architecture in the tower and chapel are very different ; and he thinks the former much older than the latter ; and that the towers may be classed among our earliest Gothic structures, though not strictly Gothic, it is a gradual progress towards that style ; and that the various fashions which prevail in their construction, and still greater in the material of which they are built, simple as the form is, may lead us to suppose they were the work of different ages. He says, "In many of them the door and windows are quite square, without the least approach to the arched form ; in others, the doors are circularly arched, and some of them assume the form of the Gothic pointed arch." "In their masonry they rival the best specimens of church building in their vicinities ; their rotund figure has not only tended to their durability, but proves incontestibly, that the art of masonry had then attained to a considerable share of perfection. To build to such an immense height with rude stones ; to give these towers the circular and taper form, which most of them present, and to have their durability so well ascertained, as it has been to us, develops a degree of skill and a perfection of art, for which, supposing churches and round towers the only stone buildings then in use, we can hardly account.

It is supposed that there still remains about eighty-two of those ancient towers in Ireland ; but their numbers are decreasing from persons undermining around them, and many are very much dilapidated.

In the vicinity of the round towers, stone-roofed structures are frequently found, which have equally

engaged the attention and researches of antiquarians ; but the period of their erection remains still undiscovered. The most remarkable of these stone-roofed edifices are Cormac's Chapel, Cashel ; Kevin's Kitchen, Glendalough ; St. Malua's Cell, Killaloe ; St. Dou-lough's Church, county of Dublin ; Columb-kill's Cell, at Kells ; and some others.

Almost within the cell, called St. Kevin's Kitchen, there is a small round tower, with the cone perfect at the top.

The round tower on the island of Devenish, in the neighbourhood of Enniskillen, is considered to be the most perfect and beautiful of those interesting remains, in Ireland. There are also, in the same place, the remains of several churches. There was a religious establishment on this island, said to have been founded by St. Laserian or St. Molaisse, who died in 563. This is one of the islands of Lough Erne, and contains from seventy to eighty acres of extremely fertile land. The place often became a prey to the Danes, by whom it was laid waste. It appears to have been restored in 1130. The grave-yard of its ancient church is so much venerated by the peasantry, that they carry their dead far and near, "to lay them with their own people." The funeral procession usually embark in boats on the north side of a place called Portora—the Port of Lamentation.

The Irish peasantry discover a strong attachment to the burial-place of their forefathers, and if removed to the remotest part of the kingdom, make it their dying request to be buried where they had

formerly lived, among their own kindred. Mr. Crofton Croker relates an extraordinary instance of this, which came to his knowledge. An old beggar-woman near the city of Cork, when dying, besought her daughter to lay her body in her favorite burial-place in White-Church. The daughter having no other means of conveying the dead body, had the coffin tied with a strong rope on her back, and by carrying this heavy load more than ten miles, dutifully fulfilled her mother's dying injunction.

Many of the towers in, or near to ancient burial-grounds, seem to give great probability to the recent supposition of their having been monumental erections over the most renowned and mighty of the Irish heroes. Other nations, in pagan times, bestowed great labour and pains to immortalize the memory of their dead ; and the Irish probably did the same, by erecting these solid built lofty edifices in those enlightened early times. They seem not of Danish origin, since no remains similar to them are found in Denmark or Norway ; nor in England, where the Danes for a long time had the ascendancy. The opinion entertained by some antiquarians is, that the round towers were erected by Fire-Worshippers, for the purpose of preserving the sacred flame from outward contamination. There is nothing like them to be seen throughout Continental Europe. Two such towers were noticed by Lord Valentia, of which, in his *Voyages and Travels*, he gives the following account :—

“ I was much pleased with the sight of two very singular round towers, about a mile north-west of the

town (Bhaugulpore in Hindostan). They much resemble those buildings in Ireland, which have hitherto puzzled the antiquaries of the sister kingdoms, excepting that they are more ornamented. It is singular that there is no tradition concerning them; nor are they held in any respect by the Hindoos. The Rajah of Jyanegur considers them as holy, and has erected a small building to shelter the great number of his subjects who annually come to worship here."

These Indian temples are described as in all points similar to our round towers in the peculiarities of form: the entrance is some feet above the ground, the four windows near the top facing the cardinal points, and having the small rounded roof. They have been seen in Persia, and are thus described in Hanway's Travels:—

"These edifices are rotundas, of about thirty feet in diameter, and raised to a point near one hundred and twenty feet." One has also been seen near Bagdad, which is mentioned in Major Keppel's Personal Narrative. These towers seemed to have belonged to a form of worship which is passed away and forgotten."

For three centuries, Ireland was a prey to the incursions and devastations of the Danes, during which period no distinct record of events can be traced. From the ruins of seven churches seen in many places, and the round towers, the Eastern origin of the Irish may be traced. The ruins of seven churches are found at Glendalough, Clonmacnoise, Iniscattery, Inchferrin, Inniskeatra, and the seven altars of Clon-

fert and Holy Cross. The country is studded with such remains. They are generally found in islands. The word *Innis* means island.

Of the origin of the round towers there are various opinions. "Hyde has given a drawing of one of the eastern structures, with its four upper windows emitting volumes of smoke." "Caucasus, the country of the Iberians, of whom were the first colonists of Ireland, still abounds in round towers; and in Sardinia, which was colonized by Iberians, such structures are numerous, under the name of *nuraggi*."

"The researches conducted in 1841, by Messrs. Odell, Abell, Hackett, Wall, Horgan, and Windale, by which nine of these structures have been examined, have established the sepulchral character of many of the Irish towers. In the base of the tower of Ardmore the remains of two skeletons were found deposited in a bed of sifted earth. Above this was a floor of concrete, over which were four successive layers of large stones, closely fitted to each other, and over these was laid another floor of smooth concrete. Here a care and precaution were displayed, indicating the importance of the personages interred, while the absence of any remains of coffin, or crozier, or ring, or other ornament, afforded a fair presumption that the deceased were not Christian. Three skeletons have been found in the base of Cloyne tower. Human remains were also discovered in the tower of Ram Island (Antrim). Similar discoveries have been recently made in the tower of Roscrea, by E. Wall, Esq., of that town. The tower of Drumboe has been

submitted to a like examination. In this, at several feet below, a deposit of rubbish, earth, human bones, horns, and stones, which had undergone the action of fire, a concrete floor similar to that found in the towers of Ardmore, Cloyne, Roscrea, &c., was reached. Beneath this was found a stratum of dark loamy earth, under which, even with the foundation of the building, lay a skeleton nearly perfect. Of the skull, a cast has been taken for the Belfast Natural History Society. But what, beyond all question, decides the Paganism of these buildings, is the discovery of an *urn* of *green* clay. Mr. Black, the author of a 'History of Brechin,' says that bones were got, laid below flat stones; thus in the same sepulchre exhibiting cremation and inhumation together, as has been found in Etruscan tombs. These discoveries justify the name of one of the Irish towers, *Fertagh*, the sepulchral fire-tower, and clearly assimilate those structures to the Nuraggi, the Gozo Tower, the Dago-bas of Ceylon, and other ancient structures appertaining to sun-worship."

"A striking perfection observable in the construction of the ancient *Turaghans* or round towers, is the inimitable perpendicular maintained. No architect of the present day could observe such regularity. Nelson's Pillar (Dublin) has been proved to vary somewhat from the perpendicular line; but the keenest eye cannot trace a deviation in a single instance, from amongst the whole of the Sabæan monuments. Even the tower of Kilmacduagh, one of the largest in the kingdom, having, from some accident, been forced

as firmly as before, such was the accuracy of its original elevation; while the cement employed in giving it solidity, and which is the direct counterpart of the Indian chunam, bids defiance to the efforts of man to dissever, except by the exertion of extraordinary power.”*

These facts prove that the round towers were built at a time when the Irish had arrived at a highly advanced knowledge of architecture. The stones of these buildings are often found to have been conveyed from some distant quarries, and are admirably well joined and locked into each other.

Human bones were found under the tower at Timahoe, which had evidently undergone the process of burning.

A paragraph appeared in an Irish journal (1841), which furnishes a more minute statement than that which we have already given. “We learn that some time since, Mr. O’Dell, the proprietor of Ardmore, in the county of Waterford, intended to erect floors in the tower there, and explored the interior of the tower down to the foundation. With considerable difficulty he caused to be removed a vast accumulation of small stones, under which were layers of large masses of rock; and having reached as low down as within a few inches of the external foundation, it was deemed useless and dangerous to proceed any further; and in this opinion some members of the Society who had witnessed what had been done, coincided. In this

* O’Brien’s Round Towers of Ireland, p. 515.

state of the proceedings, a letter from Sir William Betham was forwarded to Mr. O'Dell, intimating that further exploration would be desirable. Upon which, the latter gentleman, at great peril, commenced the task again. He now found series of large rocks so closely wedged together, that it was difficult to introduce any implement between them. After considerable labour, these were also removed; and at length a perfectly smooth floor of mortar was reached, which he feared must be regarded as a *ne plus ultra*; but still persevering, he removed the mortar, underneath which he found a bed of mould, and under this, some feet below the outside foundation, was discovered, lying prostrate from east to west, a human skeleton.”*

The forms of the round towers vary in a few instances. That of Kinneagh is hexagonal at the base, and round at the top. Some of the doors are arched, others a plain oblong. There are three belts round Ardmore tower, and one under the conical top of Devenish, of sculptured work. “The masonry in every instance which has come to our knowledge, is composed of regular courses of freestone, neatly laid and finely joined, while the interior is rougher, the mortar invariably appearing of the finest consistence.”

“Near the old cathedral at Cashel there is a round tower, from which to the church, there is a subterraneous passage. This tower is supposed to be the oldest structure upon the rock of Cashel from this

* Scenery and Antiquities of Ireland, by W. P. Willis, Esq.

circumstance, that all the erections on the rock, which is limestone, are built of the same materials, except the tower, which is of freestone." "The few notices found in early Irish history, mention these towers under the names of *Turaghan* and *Feidh nemedh* without any note of their *erection, era, or use*; thus seeming to show, that they were ancient buildings of unknown origin a thousand years ago, as they are now. One of the earliest events of Irish history, the overthrow of the Firbolg power by the Danaans, is stated to have occurred at a place called, from the vicinity of towers, *muigh Tuireth nabh Fomorach*, (the plain of the Fomorian Tower). *Tor Inis* (Tory Island) the Island of the Tower, is also noticed at a like early period, and so is the tower of *Temur* or Tara, &c."

It has been supposed, that these places were the penitential retreats for Anchorites. They may have served for this purpose, but were not, certainly, erected for it. This was the case with the *Turaghan Ancoire*, (the Fire Tower of the Anchorite), on Holy Island, in the Shannon. The name refers at once to its original pagan, and subsequent Christian use.

More for the amusement than edification of our young readers, the following legend is subjoined. The tower at Ardmore is built of hewn stone, differing from most of the other existing towers, in being divided into projecting stories, ending in a conical point bent at the top, on which there was a kind of ornament, which is said to have been brought down by the firing of musket balls.

The legend attributes the building of the tower to St. Declan, the patron saint of Ardmore, and states that it was the work of one night, and further adds, that it was his intention to build it up even to reach the sky ; but being provoked by some inquisitive old woman, he stopped short in his operations, and hastily seizing her, flung her aloft, and there she remained on the top of the tower, until the last of her bones crumbled away. The fallen ornament called " Cross like a crutch," probably gave rise to this ludicrous legend.

The 24th of July is St. Declan's day, when the superstitious crowd flock to the shrine and the saint's holy rock on the shore. This mass of rock they believe to have floated from Rome with consecrated vestments for the saint and a bell for his tower.

The round tower of Cloyne is 92 feet high ; its entrance about 13 feet from the ground, and the thickness of its carefully built stone wall is 43 inches. It was shattered by lightning on the night of January 10, 1749, of which the following account is transmitted to us by the good Bishop Berkley. " Our round tower stands where it did ; but a little stone arched vault on the top was cracked, and must be repaired ; the bell also was thrown down, and broke its way through three boarded stories, but remains entire. The door was shivered into small pieces and dispersed, and there was a stone forced out of the wall. The thunder-clap was by far the greatest that I ever heard in Ireland."

CHAPTER XIII.

The Danes in possession of Dublin, 808—The Fin Gals and Dubh Gals—Division of territories and contentions—Three Norwegian brothers arrive as merchant-men—Roderick, king of Wales, driven from his own country, takes refuge in Ireland—Cessation from warfare—879, civil war between the monarch and the Bishop of Cashel—Cormac's Will—His death—Memorials left by him—Flaherty taken prisoner—His penitence and reformation—Appointed successor to Cormac—Callaghan, king of Munster—Treachery of Sitricus—Capture of Callaghan and Dunchan—Defeat of the Danes and liberation of the king—Mahon and Brian Boiroihme the sons of Kennedy—The light armed Irish infantry called kerns—Their signal-fires—Murkertach's success against the Danes—Destruction of seminaries, &c.—Reign of Mahon—Dalcassian tribe, headed by Brian Boiroimhe—Victories achieved—Mahon assassinated—Brian succeeds him—His successes excites the jealousy of Malachy II.—Brian invited to Tara, assumes the sovereignty—Prosperous reign of Brian.

FROM Harris's *Annals*, we find that the Danes were in possession of Dublin in 808. These unwelcome marauders were designated by the Irish Fin Gals, or white strangers, and Dubh Gals, or black strangers. The first were successful in their assaults on the city, in which they raised a strong rath, and from thence

they extended their conquests north, and south as far as Bray and the mountains of Wicklow. These parts seem soon after to have been made the headquarters of the Danish settlements in Leinster, and from this circumstance these districts were called Fingal and Dubh-gall—that is to say, *the territories of the white foreigners*, or Norwegians—and that of the black foreigners. Of the last class, the Dubh-gal, we do not find any notice in history; but a tradition of them is preserved by the natives of the country even to this day.

It appears that about the year 850 the black strangers first effected a landing in Ireland, and commenced their operations by an attack on the Fingals, whom they overcame and drove out of Dublin, possessing themselves not only of the city, but of the adjoining territories. The white strangers retired before them, only for the purpose of renewing the attack with a more powerful reinforcement which they obtained, in the following year, from their own country, and by their assistance they re-possessioned themselves of all they had lost, after a furious contest which lasted three days and nights.

In 853, a great army, collected from the different isles of the north, under the command of three Norwegian brothers of the blood royal, Anlaf, Ivar, and Sitric, invaded Ireland. It is said that they came into the country under the disguise of merchant-men, and having obtained an easy access among the people, by degrees, they assumed their true character. As chieftain warriors at the head of their troops, they

possessed themselves of all the maritime posts, and exercised entire control over the sea coasts, compelling all foreigners and natives to submit and pay tribute to them. Anlaf took possession of Dublin, which he enlarged ; Ivar, of Limerick ; and Sitric, of Waterford, of which city he is said to be the founder. According to the annals of Innisfallen, A.D. 863, upon the death of the monarch Melachlin, Anlaf and the Danes placed his successor, Aodh Finliath on the throne. This prince was of the northern Hy-Niell race. He had joined the Danes in devastating the principality of Meath, which had belonged to two princes, Lorcan and Concobar. Both were taken into captivity ; the first falling into the hands of Aodh was treated with the utmost cruelty, and deprived of his eye-sight ; and Anlaf having seized Concobar drowned him at Clonard. Among the numerous spoliations of this Danish chieftain, was that of Armagh, whose riches he carried off, and laid the shrines and hospitals in ashes. He also made incursions into north Britain, and after a blockade of four months, the renowned fortress of Alcluyd* surrendered to him. In the Albanian territory his career closed : he was suddenly seized by stratagem and slain.

At this time Roderick, king of Wales, being driven from his own country by the Danes, came over

* “Alcluyd was wholly razed to the ground. The black strangers were resistless ; and the Britons, Saxons, Angles, and Piets were mingled in captivity beneath the yoke of Anlaf and Hingvar, (Ivar).”—*Palgrave, English Commonwealth.*

to Ireland, as a place of refuge, rent and torn as it was by the same lawless depredators. From the time of the first establishment of an Irish colony in north Britain, a close and friendly intercourse between it and the Irish was maintained and strengthened by perpetual inter-marriages.

After the death of Anlaf, Ireland, for a short season, enjoyed a cessation from warfare. The lands were every where cultivated; the churches and abbeys, long lying in ruins, were rebuilt; the seminaries were re-opened and again filled with students. But soon the torch of discord was re-kindled, and those who should have been at peace evinced a disposition for war. It was not now the foreign foe who covered the field of battle with the slain; for these had been subdued by the persevering bravery of the people of Leinster, (who had formerly disgraced themselves by a confederacy with them), and great numbers were compelled to leave the island. On this occasion war was waged between the monarch Flan Siona himself, and Cormac Mac Culinan, King and Bishop of Cashel. How strange, how unaccountable that two such characters as history represents those men to have been, should give way to the rancorous feelings of enemies! The first a generous, noble-minded prince: the other a man of eminent piety and learning. The cause of their quarrel is thus accounted for in M'Curtin's Brief Discourse, &c. "The Book of Wars and Battles mentions at large the reasons which induced Cormac at this time to wage war upon the Laganians, and says, it was because their king,

Cearbhull, refused to pay the usual tributes due from the kings in Leath Mogha, to the king of Cashel."

The territories of Cashel had become nearly equal to those of Tara, and the subsidies demanded extended over the southern half of the kingdom. This was now resisted by Flan Siona, who aided and encouraged the people of Leinster in their refusal to pay the customary tributes to the king of Munster. Cormac, who was inclined to peace, would never have engaged in this warfare, had he not been under the influence of the abbot of Iniscathery, his minister of war.

The combination of king, bishop, and warrior in the same person is rather strange. In speaking of the same period in England, Hume says, "The ecclesiastics were then no less warlike than the civil magistrates." And Mosheim, in his account of the internal state of the church in the ninth century, tells us, that "The bishops and heads of monasteries held many lands and castles by a feudal tenure; and being thereby bound to furnish their princes with a certain number of soldiers in time of war, were obliged also to take the field themselves at the head of these troops."

The first battle between Cormac and Flan Siona with his confederates the king of Leinster, &c., took place in the year 907, on the Heath of Moylena—the plain of Lene, in the King's County, where in olden times a great victory was gained by Con "of the hundred battles."

On this occasion Cormac was victorious, and received hostages as marks of submission from the

monarch. After this, he followed up his conquest by marching into Roscommon, where he obtained similar pledges, thus rendering the northern part of the kingdom tributary to the ecclesiastical sovereign. This state of things did not last long. The people of Leinster determined to resist the claim, prepared themselves anew for battle, and again aided by the monarch, and the princes of Leath-Cuinn, collected a numerous force. Cormac also made preparations, but with an unwilling mind. He had many scruples which he communicated to his friend and adviser, the abbot of Iniscathery, by whom they were all set aside as unworthy to be entertained by a king and warrior. Unfortunately this proud, ambitious adviser prevailed, although Cormac had a strong foreboding that the battle would terminate fatally for him. Under this impression he made his will, and left the succession of his crown to a prince of the Dalcassian tribe, though he himself was a Eugenian. Not content with declaring this, his last will, he sent for Lorcan, the head of the Dalcassian race, and in the presence of all his court and kinsmen, declared him to be the lawful heir, according to alternate succession, to the crown of Munster. Keating says, that he afterwards added to his will the following bequests to the churches :—"An ounce of gold, an ounce of silver, and a horse and arms to Ardfinan ; a golden and a silver chalice, and a vestment of silk, to Lismore ; a golden and a silver chalice, four ounces of gold, and five of silver, to Cashel ; three ounces of gold, and a mass-book, to Emly ; an ounce of

gold, and another of silver, to Glendaloch ; a horse and arms, with an ounce of gold, and a silk vestment, to Kildare ; twenty-four ounces of gold and silver, to Armagh ; three ounces of gold, to Iniscatha ; three ounces of gold, and a silk vestment, with his royal benediction, to the successor of Mungaired, (Mungret).”

Having thus settled his temporal concerns, Cormac marched at the head of his troops to the field of battle. It is said, that “on the way he was met by a herald from the king of Leinster offering the most honourable terms of peace, which Cormac was disposed to accept ; but the furious abbot upbraided him with cowardice ; and such was his influence over his infatuated sovereign, that he dismissed the ambassador.” The forces of his enemies were more than two to one against him, and the cause was unjust ; both of these considerations must have weighed heavily on the pious mind of the king, and been also dispiriting to his followers. He pitched his tent in the plain of Magh-Albe, and there waited the approach of the enemy. They soon advanced, and after a long and desperate struggle, the troops of Munster gave way. Cormac’s foreboding was verified ; he saw the sun go down no more, and many of his brave followers, the nobles and princes of Munster, fell with him. It has been said that Cormac was thrown from his horse in the heat of battle, and that his body was afterwards found by some of the victors, who cut off his head,* and carried it trium-

* In this barbarous practice of cutting off the heads of

phantly to Flan Siona. By him the trophy was received in a different manner from that which they expected,—far from applauding, he condemned the barbarous act, and taking hold of the reeking head he kissed it, and bathed it with his tears. To evince farther the veneration in which he held this good king and prelate, he ordered the remains to be interred with the respect due to his merits and royal dignity.

Cormac left memorials, which time has not obliterated, in the beautiful chapel which he erected on the rock of Cashel, and his Royal Psalter, in which the ancient records of his country are illustrated. The seven last turbulent years of his reign had been preceded by a time of peace, which he passed in those employments much more congenial to his turn of mind. The ruins of his chapel are thus described by Sir R. C. Hoare in his “Tour in Ireland.” “The stone chapel of Cormac at Cashel, is no where to be surpassed, and is itself a host in point of remote and singular antiquity; and though her monastic architecture may fall short both in design and execution, and be obliged to yield the palm of superiority to the sister kingdoms, yet Ireland, in her stone roofed chapels, round towers, and rich crosses, may justly boast of singularities unknown and unsurpassed by either of them. The two crosses at Monasterboyce,

those slain in battle, the Irish followed the Egyptians, with whom it originated.

are by far the richest in their sculpture of any I have yet seen."

Flaherty, the abbot of Iniscattery, to whom all the evil consequences of this fatal war were attributed, was taken prisoner. No one pitied him—no one wished to release him ; therefore he remained in confinement until after the death of Carol, king of Leinster ; and after his liberation, so much was he execrated by the common people, that had he not been protected by the clergy they would have torn him to pieces. He retired to his monastery of Iniscattery,* and in that seclusion he reflected with sorrow upon his former ambition, pride, and violence. With repentance came newness of life ; and this same man, changed in heart, was called, after the death of Lorcan the Dalcassian, to reign as the relative of Cormac the Eugenian. He governed his people with wisdom and integrity to the end of his days.

Upon the demise of Flaherty, the succession ought to have reverted to Kennedy, the son of Lorcan, according to the enactment of Oliol Ollum ; but with new kings frequently came new regulations, and therefore the alternate succession of Dalcassian and Eugenian princes was not strictly maintained.

Kennedy had a competitor whose name stands prominent in the record of these times. This was Callaghan, of whose history different versions have been given. Some represent him as a most successful

* Iniscattery is a celebrated island in the river Shannon, where the ruins of eleven churches may still be traced.

warrior in reducing the power of the Danes. Others say that he joined himself to them in wasting the lands and destroying the churches, The following account is abstracted from Keating, M'Curtin, Dr. Warner, &c., who all agree in the detail of the principal events; and their statements have been adopted by McGregor in his "*True Stories of Ireland.*" The contest between the rival princes was not decided by force of arms, but by the persuasive eloquence of Callaghan's mother, who induced Kennedy to yield up his claim; and from thenceforward he became a faithful friend and counsellor to Callaghan.

The following account of Callaghan, king of Munster, is treated as a mere romance by some historians, while it is related by far the greater number as an authentic narrative. He is represented to have been a very successful warrior against his country's common foe, whom he defeated in many pitched battles, and completely reduced the power of the Danes in Munster. During the chances of war, the wife and sister of Sitricus the Dane, fell into his hands, and met with such kind treatment from him as gained their esteem and confidence.

When they were liberated, they returned to Sitricus, who had been proclaimed king of Dublin by his victorious countrymen. From the information communicated by his wife and sister, this cruel prince formed a treacherous device to get Callaghan into his power; and in order to effect this, he entered into a league with Donogh, the son of Flan Siona, who in the latter part of his reign had employed Danish mer-

cenaries to lay waste the beautiful isles of Lough Ree, and to plunder the rich monastery of Clonmacnoise of all its treasures in gold and silver, while with unmerited warfare he harassed his son-in-law, Niell Glundubh, his appointed successor. This prince ascended the throne in 916, upon the death of Flan, who had reigned thirty-seven years. Far from pursuing the steps of his father-in-law, the new monarch opposed the Danes, and revived the Taltine games, which in consequence of their incursions had been given up since the year 872. After having ravaged Leinster and Munster, the Danes stormed the city of Armagh, and slew 1000 of its inhabitants. Their farther depredations were stopped by the determined bravery of Niell, who obtained a signal victory over them at Lough Foyle.

He was, however, overpowered and slain with most of his generals by Sitricus ; and thus ended his short reign of three years. Donogh succeeded him and followed his father Flan's example, in forming a confederacy with the Danes. He counselled and aided Sitricus in his scheme of inveigling the unsuspecting Callaghan, to whom an embassy was sent, with a treaty of peace, to be ratified with an alliance in marriage between Berina, the sister of Sitricus, and Callaghan. Such terms could not but be agreeable to this prince, upon whom the charms of his beautiful captive had made a deep impression, and with inconsiderate eagerness he conceded, contrary to the advice of his faithful friend and monitor, Kennedy. With a chosen band of eighty men, among whom was

Dunchan the son of Kennedy, Callaghan in full confidence of the sincerity of Sitricus proceeded towards Dublin, and had arrived within its precincts before the warning of a friend arrested his progress. The wife of Sitricus was an Irishwoman. She loved her country, and favoured him who made light the chains of her captivity when she was in his power. No sooner had she discovered the secret purpose of her husband, than she despatched a messenger with the tidings to Callaghan : but he was already entrapped. When he would have retreated he could not ; the enemy surrounded him on every side. His brave followers cut their way through hosts of Danes ; but more and more issued from the ambushments in which they had been concealed, until the blood and bodies of the slain covered the ground. None of the Irish escaped but Callaghan and Dunchan, who were led triumphantly to Sitricus. On the following unreasonable terms this perfidious tyrant offered liberty to the royal captive—that Limerick, Cashel, Cork, Waterford, and all the strong garrisons of Munster should be delivered up, and Eric* or a fine be paid for every Danish soldier slain by a Momonian. “ Such,” said Sitricus, “ is my demand, and neither power nor policy shall deliver you out of my hands.”

Callaghan heard in silence, and so far he seemed to comply, as to offer no opposition or change of the requisition proposed ; but with the despatch he sent

* Eric, or blood fine, laid on the kindred of a homicide, is one of the ancient Irish laws. It was paid by the different relatives of the manslayer, to the family of the slain.

his own private instructions ; which were, that no terms or treaty of peace should be made, or negotiated with Sitricus, who was bound by no law of God or man. He directed that Kennedy should immediately be proclaimed king of Munster, and expel every Dane from the province. Furthermore, Callaghan advised that a strong army should march to Ard-macha, where he was told he and his fellow prisoner were to be sent. At the same time, he directed that the Momonian fleet should steer its course to Dundalk ; that if the first failed to rescue them, the last should intercept their passage to Norway, whither Sitricus had resolved on sending them.

These injunctions were strictly followed ; a body of chosen troops, under the command of Donough Mac-Keefe, marched through Connaught to Armagh ; and a naval force of seventy ships, commanded by Failbe Fionn, Prince of Desmond, sailed for Dundalk. The army proceeded to Armagh, which they encompassed and took by storm, putting the garrison to death. They then pursued the main body of the Danes to Dundalk, where Sitricus had already arrived with his prisoners, and having put them on board a Danish vessel, caused them to be bound to the masts. In such a position the army sent to rescue them could do nothing. But now the Momonian fleet entered the bay ; and when they saw the shameful bonds which held their king, they were fired with indignation. They boarded the vessel, and with eager impetuosity the admiral himself rushed forward to cut asunder the chains of the prisoners, who were quickly borne off to

their own people. They both escaped unhurt, but their brave deliverer, unmindful of his own safety while he guarded them, fell under the blows of Sitricus, who, having severed the head from the mangled body, held it up streaming with blood, hoping thereby to intimidate all who would have opposed him, and enfeeble their efforts. Far different was the effect produced by this appalling spectacle. It enraged them to the most desperate acts of revenge. Fingal, the second in command, dashed forward, threw himself upon Sitricus with a lion-like grasp, and plunged into the deep, where they together sunk into a watery grave. Two other Irish chieftains, determined not to be outdone, flung themselves upon the two brothers of Sitricus, Tor and Magnus, and in like manner were engulfed by overwhelming billows. Such unprecedented deeds of valour could not fail to fill the minds of the enemy with dismay. They gave way on every side, and much slaughter ensued. The victorious Momonians carried back their king in triumph to his own dominions; the only drawback to the public rejoicing, was the death of their four brave chieftains; such a loss they felt was irreparable.

There remains little more to be said of Callaghan. Wishing, if possible, utterly to root out the Danes, on resuming the government of his province, he appointed Kennedy the commander-in-chief of the whole army, and under him were placed his sons, Mahon, and Brian Boiromhe, then in his sixteenth year. Thus were these martial youths early trained to arms. Details are given of numerous warlike engagements which

they had with the Danes, wherein they obtained the victory. But the most signal of all was the battle of Singland, where Kennedy and his brave sons, with a numerous army, encountered the Danes, under the command of Amlave. At this time, A.D. 943, Limerick was the strong-hold of the Danes. In those days battles were fought without fire-arms: a discharge of sling-stones, arrows, and lances, were the weapons used by the kerns, or light infantry, while the heavy armed troops fought breast to breast, with their swords, skeyns, and pole-axes.

The light armed Irish infantry were called kernes. They are represented by Geraldus as not a little formidable, from their remarkable activity in returning constantly to the attack, with a dexterous use of their missile weapons. They are described as being light and agile, and as a very harassing force to the enemy.

By means of their signal-fires, which were rapidly lighted from hill to hill, the Irish gave instant warning of an invasion to all the neighbouring districts. O'Halloran, in his History of Ireland, says, "It is curious, even at this day, to observe the judgment with which these beacons were placed. I have examined several of these eminences; and not only through the whole county of Clare were forts so disposed, that in two hours the entire country could receive the alarm, whether the attempts were made by sea or land, or both, but in Lower Ormond, stations were so judiciously placed, that the least attempts or preparations towards the Shannon side, were quickly made known."

In Kennedy's army there was a leader of distinguished bravery, named Sullivan. In a battle which took place near the city of Limerick, the Danes lost their two chiefs, Amlave and Moran; the latter, who was the son of the king of Denmark, was slain by Sullivan; the former by Callaghan, who, on this occasion, led out a numerous force. The loss of their generals was followed by the discomfiture of the Danes, who fled towards Limerick, pursued by their victors, who took possession of the town, and drove from thence all the foreigners, excepting the Danish merchants, who were suffered to remain, on account of the service which they rendered to the country.

The most successful warrior at this time was Murkertach, a prince of great promise, and so beloved of the people, that his death, which happened in a conflict with the Danes, was celebrated by a poet of that day, who says, that the death of their hero left "all his countrymen orphans." He describes him as "a warrior of the saffron hue."* Murkertach, had a chosen band of 1200 warriors, raised in his own principality. With these, he made a circuit throughout the island as a conquering hero, reducing the Danes, and exacting tributes and hostages from the people of

* A distinguished title to the heroes of Ireland. "The warriors of the saffron hue." The Irish delighted in this colour, and used it in the dye of their garments, until a statute was enacted in the reign of Henry VIII., forbidding any one to "use or wear any shirt, smock, kerchor, bendol, nechorchour, mocket, or linen cappe, coloured or dyed with saffron." This, with other Irish customs, was unnecessarily rendered punishable by law.

Leinster and Munster, all of which he delivered up to the monarch, who returned them again to him as their proper guardian.

In the year 944, the monarch Donough closed his useless life, after a reign of twenty-four years. The state in which he left the country is thus recorded by his annalist: "Without law to guide her, with rulers treacherous, false, and factious, the realm of Erin hath sunk into darkness."

Congelach, who succeeded to the throne, had, a short time before, made an attack upon Dublin, aided by the people of Leinster, and reduced the strength of the Danes; but the city was left in ruins. The Danes were often driven out; but they as often returned and regained those possessions which had been taken from them. The following year Blacar, the Danish king, retook the city.

Warfare, continued warfare, harassed the country, and put a stop to the progress of religion and learning. A second time the once famed Banchor was laid in ruins, and the names of her pious and learned inmates, with all their records and writings, sunk into oblivion.

No more now the island of saints, the mart of literature, the land of hospitality: the whole country exhibited marks of desolation. The celebrated cells of Magh-bile, which resounded with the praises of God; the seminaries of Armagh, of Cashel, of Lismore, &c. &c., lay in dust and ashes.

After the death of Callaghan, Mahon, the son of Kenndey, king of Thomond, succeeded to the throne

of Cashel. As has already been stated, he was the brother of Brian Boroimhe, the deliverer of his country from the mauraders, who for such a long period had been its scourge. The surname of Boroimhe, is said by some to have been given him, in consequence of a tribute of cattle demanded by him from the people of Leinster. Others think he received the name from Borumh, a town situated near to his palace of Kincora, in the county of Clare. Kennedy was the father of twelve sons, as we find from a poem still extant, supposed to have been written by Mac Liag, the secretary of Brian: "Twelve sons of chaste Cinneide."*

At the time of his brother's accession to the throne, Brian was in his thirty-fourth year, and had been inured to arms from his fourteenth year. He headed a brave band of his own Dalcassian tribe, whose proverbial character was, "the first in the field, and the last to leave it." This determined body entered into a solemn compact, joining hands from man to man, and rank to rank, declared their resolution to conquer or die; and hence they were called Glaslamb Dalgais, which signifies "Hearts and hands joined."†

When Mahon was appointed to fill the throne of Munster, fresh reinforcements of the Danes poured in

* Trans-Iberno-Celt Society.

† The good services of the clan of Dalgais, to the kings of Munster, in their warfare with those of Leinster, are celebrated in a poem composed by O'Dugan. Cormac also gives an honourable testimony to their prowess.

"In the vanguard was always the post of the Dalgais on entering an enemy's country."—*Vallency*.

Four great Dalcassian families were the O'Briens, the Mac Mahons, the O'Kennedys, and the Macnamaras.

from their own country, and during their predatory incursions, the king of Leinster and his children fell into their hands. Many murders were committed in Connaught, which they plundered throughout, and demolished the churches and religious institutions.

But vigorous measures were taken to put a stop to their depredations. The monarch, Congelach, who had been successful before, gained an important victory over them at a place called Munc-Bregan, in which it is said they lost 7,000 men.

In A.D. 956 another great battle was fought, in which the people of Leinster joined the Danes against the monarch, who was slain. He was succeeded by Domnal, the son of the heroic Murkertach.

In A.D. 969 a victory over the Danes of Limerick is chiefly attributed to the skill of Brian. It happened at Sulchoid, a place "frequently mentioned in subsequent ages and wars, even as far down as the last campaigns and revolutions that happened in this kingdom, as a noted place for the encampment of armies, being situated in a plain, which is guarded by heights on both sides, within one day's march of Limerick, and in the direct road from Dublin to that town by the way of Cashel."*

The Danish cavalry, as they advanced to meet those of Mahon were suddenly attacked by his brother Brian, at the head of his light horse, and were thrown into confusion, which was succeeded by the fall of many and the flight of the remainder to the

* Law of Tanistry.

main body encamped at Sulchoid. Here the whole of Mahon's forces drew up, and a general engagement ensued, which ended in the overthrow of the Danes; 3000 of whose dead bodies strewed the plain, while all who could escape with their lives, fled towards Limerick. They were hotly pursued, and the conquering army entered the city with them, killing and making captives. After having gone through the city in search of merchandize and gold, the victors carried off a great quantity of both, and then set fire to the houses and left the town in ruins.

Many other victories achieved by these warlike brothers in concert, drew upon them the envy and evil designs of rival princes. History mentions two of these, Maolmuadh and Donovan, who by treachery and stratagem contrived to take away Mahon's life, which in open warfare they could never hope to accomplish. Under pretence of a friendly meeting in conference, Mahon was induced to attend nearly unguarded. That very night the deed of darkness was perpetrated. He was carried to a lonely place in the mountains and murdered. The brothers of Maolmuadh are spoken of as taking part in the tragical event. "Mahon was murdered on the mountain of Muskerry, near Macroomp, at a place called Leath Mhaghthamhna, or the grave of Mahon, from his name. This place lies in the direct line between the places, where Maolmuadh and Donovan (the murderers) had their residence."*

* Law of Tanistry, &c.

Brian, who had been king of Thomond, was now exalted to the throne of Munster, and his first achievement was that of taking ample vengeance on his brother's murderers. Although aided by the Danes, he defeated the princes Maolmuadh and Donovan, successively in their own territories; and obtained a decided victory over them near the grave of his brother, which was called Cath Bhealaig-Leachta; the battle of the road of the sepulchre. On this spot Maolmuadh was slain by Morogh the son of Brian.

The next achievement we find on record of our Irish hero, is that of wresting the beautiful island of Iniscattery out of the possession of the Danes. It had been a place of retirement for religious persons until these disturbers of all tranquillity made it a repository for their weapons of war.

In the year 972, a Danish chieftain, Mark, the son of Harold, established himself here; but Brian, at the head of his Dalcassians, (in number 1200,) came upon him and defeated in battle all the forces which he could muster under the three great generals, Ivar, Amla, and Duibhan. On this occasion, Mark and his two sons were slain. After this important victory, Brian visited the other little islands of the Shannon, expelling the Danes, and carrying off their hoarded treasures.

In A. D. 980 the monarch Domnal, or Donald O'Nielle, after a reign of twenty-four years, died at Armagh in retirement. Weary of the pomps and cares of royalty, he had previous to his death resigned the sovereign rule.

His successor Malachy II. began well. He was in his thirtieth year when he ascended the throne, and his first exploit was a decided victory over the Danes, by whom he had been invaded in the heart of his own dominions. Not only did he drive them out, but he assailed them when all their forces were drawn together from every part of the kingdom, and after three days of sharp conflict they were compelled to submit to whatever terms their conqueror demanded.

One of the most imperative of these conditions was the instant release of all the native Irish from Danish captivity ; and then was issued, that which was called the “ noble proclamation,” “ Let all the Irish who are suffering servitude in the lands of the stranger, return now to their several homes and enjoy themselves in gladness and peace.”

This was that famous battle of Tara, by the result of which, in obedience to the edict, 2000 captives were released, among whom were Domnal the king of Leinster, and O’Niell the prince of Tyrone. From thenceforward the Irish were to be exempt from all subsidies to the Danes.

In conjunction with the king of Ulster, Malachy laid siege to Dublin, where the defeated army had taken refuge. The Danes made a desperate resistance, but after three days of assault on every side, the flag of the besiegers was seen waving on the ramparts. Malachy spared the lives of the garrison upon condition of their commanders refraining in future from hostile incursions, and paying to the monarch a large annual tribute.

Here closes the prosperous career of Malachy, whose succeeding actions seem to cancel all the brightness of his past achievements. The active and decided services which Brian had rendered to his country did not secure the gratitude of all the leading men. Private grievances caused several of them to overlook the public weal, while they formed a confederacy to free themselves from a tribute which in early times had been laid on Leinster, to pay to the king of Munster.

Donald O'Felan, prince of the Decies, and Mac Gilla-Patrick, the prince of Ossory, entered into a league with the Danes of Cork and Waterford to oppose Brien, whose forces they met at a place called the circle of the sons of Conrad. With his accustomed skill and bravery, Brian so ordered and arranged the attack as to disconcert the enemy at the first onset, and secure to himself the victory. The disordered troops fled to Waterford, pursued by the conqueror, who made the prince of Ossory his prisoner, and compelled the other chiefs to deliver hostages. He afterwards passed through Leinster, and reduced the whole province to submit and give hostages as pledges of future obedience.

But the most inveterate and powerful of Brian's opponents was Malachy. Instead of uniting his forces with this successful warrior in order to exterminate the Danes, Malachy seems to have lost all his former greatness in the littleness of private jealousy. He could not bear a competitor, and seized on the first opportunity to harass and annoy his rival,

by leading his army into the Dalcassian territories which he plundered as an enemy's country. On this occasion he committed an act which was deeply resented by both the king of Munster and his subjects, this was, the cutting down their revered tree* in the plain of Adoration, at Adair. Under the boughs of this tree, called Bile-Magh-Adair, all the Dalcassian princes had been inaugurated.†

* In the annals of the Four Masters for the year 981, there is an account of the destruction of this sacred tree.

† When a monarch in Ireland was to be inaugurated or proclaimed king, a general assembly was convened of the princes, chieftains, and nobility. This meeting was held at Tarah, where the king of Ireland was crowned; but if it was any of the provincial kings, the ceremony took place in some part of his own territory.

The newly appointed king being seated on a throne in the midst of the assembly, they all paid him homage with bended knees, submitting themselves to him, with all that appertained to them. When this was done, one of the chief princes came forward and took from the king his sword, and gave him instead, a long white, unknotty wand or rod, saying, "Receive Sir, the auspicious ensign of your dignity, and remember to imitate in your life and government, the whiteness and straightness and unknottiness of this rod to the end, that no evil tongue may find cause to asperse the candour of your actions with blackness, nor any kind of corruption, or tie of friendship be able to pervert your justice. Take therefore upon you in a lucky hour the government of this people, and exercise the powers given you hereby, with all freedom and security."

The crown was then placed upon his head. It was composed of gold and precious stones, in the Irish language it was called *Mionn Riogha*, which signifies royal cap. The first king we hear of being crowned with gold, was Muineamhon, in the year of the world 3075. A great many helmets were made at the same time, and neck and fore pieces of gold for the most celebrated champions.

The ceremony of the white rod at the coronation, was always observed until the coming of the English.

In the year 1692, a golden cap, supposed to have been a

Many more aggressions were committed by Malachy against Brian, and much slaughter ensued. He spread "havoc and devastations" over the plains of Glen Mama, which were part of Brian's dominions in Leath Mogha.

The next victory recorded, was achieved by Brian over the Danes of Dublin. On receiving information that they had made an irruption into Leinster, and had carried off his liegeman Donogh Mac-Donald, Brian flew to his rescue, and after having set him at liberty, he burned down the principal fortress of the Northmen, took possession of all the gold, silver, and other valuable commodities which they had amassed, and compelled them to deliver up their king to be banished from the country, as the instigator of the outrage.

In A.D. 1001, the superiority of the heroic Brian was now acknowledged on all sides, and to him the Irish princes and people looked as alone competent to hold the reigns of supreme sovereignty. At their invitation he again marched at the head of his brave troops to the ancient residence of the monarchs, and first received the homage of the last legitimate suc-

provincial crown, was found in the county of Tipperary, at a place called Bermanely, now the devil's bit. It is said, "this cap or crown, weighs about five ounces; the border and the head is raised in chase work, and it seems to bear some resemblance to the close crown of the eastern empire, which was composed of the helmet, together with the diadem, as the learned Selden observes in his *Titles of Honour*. A representation of this crown is given in Ware's *Antiquities*, Plate 1, No. 2. It was found by some turf-cutters, ten feet under ground. See the translator's Preface to Keating's *Irish History*.

cessor of the Hy-Niell kings, fifty of whom had successively preceded him in an uninterrupted line. Once or twice, during the course of eight years, some slight resistance was made by the southern Hy-Niells, which was easily quelled, and among the train of subordinate kings attending the new monarch on his circuit through the provinces, we find Malachy himself as one of his liegemen.

The wise and prudent measures of Brian brought prosperity to the country. War had ceased throughout the land, and instead of the sword and battle-axe, the implements of cultivation were taken up. Schools and colleges were repaired; new institutions were founded: new laws were instituted; fortifications were erected; bridges and massive causeways were built: churches were repaired, and additional privileges and endowments granted. Thus was the public money devoted to purposes of national utility, and during this period of tranquillity, the high standard which morality had attained, is recorded by a French historian. “*Les lois et les mœurs étaient tellement respectés, que les bardes Irlandois, enchantant le règne heureux de Brien Boiroihmh, ont dit :—*

“ Une vierge, unissant aux dons de la nature,
De l’or et de rubis l’éclat et la valeur,
A la charté du jour ou dans la nuit obscure ;
D’une mer jusqu’e à l’autre allait sans protecteur,
Ne perdait rien de sa parure,
Ne risquait rien pour sa pudeur.”

The tradition of a young and beautiful maiden,

adorned with costly ornaments of jewels and gold, carrying in her hand a white wand, on the top of which was a sparkling ring, travelling alone, without guide or guardian, over the whole island unmolested and safe, is thus described in one of the Irish melodies.

“Rich and rare were the gems she wore,
And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore ;
But oh ! her beauty was far beyond,
Her sparkling gems and snow-white wand.
Lady, dost thou not fear to stray,
So lone and so lovely, along the bleak way ?
Are Erin’s sons so good or so cold,
As not to be tempted by woman or gold ?”
“Sir Knight, I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm,
For though they love woman and golden store,
Sir Knight, they love honour and virtue more.”

The truth of such a romantic legend may be doubted, but the following interesting document relating to the same period of time, is transcribed from the “Irish Antiquarian Researches,” by Sir William Betham, which he had extracted from the Book of Armagh, written in the 7th century.

“St. Patrick, when ascending to heaven, commanded all the fruits of his labour, arising both from baptism and alms, to be brought to the apostolic city, which in the Scottish language is called Ardmacha ; I found it thus stated in the book of the Scots. I, that is to say, Calvus Perennis, wrote this in the sight of Brian, Emperor of the Scots, and what I wrote

he confirmed for all kings, with his seal of wax." In a note, Sir William remarks, "This passage is written in a more modern hand than the rest of the MS. The Brian *Emperor of the Scots* there mentioned, was *Brian Boiroimhe*, who, according to the Annals of the four masters, was a week at Armagh, in A.D. 1004, and made an offering of twenty ounces of gold on the altar there."

The same learned author says, "*The Psalter of Columbkille*, written in the seventh century, is probably the oldest Irish MS. extant. The four gospels of *Dimma*, written early in the seventh century, is perhaps, the oldest in the pure Irish character." In another note he again refers to this passage, "From the writing of the Visitation of the sick in Dimma's book, and the entry written in the presence of Brian Boiroimhe in the year 1006, in the book of Armagh, being precisely the same character, and differing in toto from that of the remainder of the MS., commencing on a spare blank part of the vellum, at the end of the gospel of St. Luke, and continued on an inserted membrane, I consider it to have been written long after the book itself, viz., at the end of the tenth, or beginning of the eleventh century."

CHAPTER XIV.

Brian's court kept at Kincora—After a peaceful reign of 12 years, war breaks out again—The Battle of Clontarf—Morogh, chief commander, killed by Anrud—Brian's army victorious—Brian slain in his tent by Bruadair, the Danish admiral—Character of Brian Boiroimhe—Account of his death, found in the annals of Ireland, anno 1113—Heroic conduct of the Dalcassians, under the guidance of Donogh—Malachy re-assumes the government—Reign of Turlough—Letter of Lanfranc to this monarch—Murkertach, the son of Turlough, in carrying on a warfare with his brothers, devastates the country—Reign of Tordelvac, succeeded by Roderick O'Conner, the last king of Ireland—The gospel introduced into Denmark.

BRIAN BOIROIMHE, one of the most heroic and brave of Ireland's ancient monarchs, was not only accounted the wisest and best of her kings, but also her deliverer from the Danish yoke. His court is represented as having been splendidly kept at Kincora, his favourite residence, which he greatly enlarged and embellished. Although he had passed a life of warfare, he was a lover of peace, and during the twelve years that he enjoyed this best of blessings, he collected round him men of piety and learning, whom he encouraged and entertained with munificent hospitality. But the

days of his tranquillity did not long continue, for the clash of arms was again heard, and the aged monarch in his eighty-eighth year, was compelled to take the field.

The torch of discord was kindled in his own court. It is said that a game of chess gave rise to a disagreement between Mortogh, the eldest son of Brian, and Malmordha, his brother-in-law, which again involved the country in bloodshed and warfare. Malmordha had, in the year 999, entered into a league with the Danes, and with the assistance of their forces, possessed himself of the crown of Leinster. These he again assembled, with all the nobles and chieftains of his province, and with specious arguments infused into their minds a spirit of discontent and insubordination against the authority of Brian. In addition to these forces, numerous others were drawn together, from the alluring prospect of the conquest of Ireland, and the acquisition of the "abundant wealth" still to be found there.

Brian received information of the great army of combined forces from Scotland, the Orkneys, and Hebrides, the Isle of Man, the isles of Shetland, from Scandinavia, Denmark, and Norway, which had poured into his country. He heard, but was not dismayed. It is to be hoped that he trusted in the God of battles, and feared not the numbers of the enemy, though far superior to his own forces, and far more than he had on any former occasion encountered. His own brave sons were his generals, and he himself the chief commander. A spacious field, called Maigh-

nealta, near Clontarf, was chosen for the scene of battle.

Among Brian's troops there was, however, a traitor. Malachy, the deposed monarch, always regarded him as the usurper of his rights, and when the signal for attack was given, he filed off with all his army, and joined himself to the forces of the enemy.

Early on this auspicious day, Prince Morogh besought his father to retire to his tent, on account of his great age and failing strength. This prince truly inherited the intrepidity and greatness of soul of Brian, his father. From the age of thirteen, he had been trained to arms, and was fully capable of filling the leading post, which now devolved upon him.

The night previous to the great battle of Chron-Tarbhe, now Clontarf, within two miles of Dublin, the Danes spent in preparation, and at the dawn of day they appeared drawn up in battle array. It was a morning to be remembered and registered on Ireland's historic page. It was a day on which Brian felt a strong reluctance to imbrue his hands with blood, for it was Good Friday, April 23, 1014.

After having arranged his army, Brian addressed them in such language as was calculated to excite them to fight valiantly, where so much was at stake. He represented the long course of calamities which the frequent incursions of these foreign barbarians had brought upon them, by whom their kings and chieftains had been slaughtered; their towns and castles devoted to the flames; their sacred edifices plundered, torn down, and violated. Then in a loud

prophetic voice, he exclaimed, "The blessed Trinity has looked down upon our wrongs, and endued you with power and courage this day to extirpate for ever the tyranny of the Danes over Ireland, thus punishing them for their innumerable crimes and sacrileges, by the avenging power of the sword ;" so saying, he triumphantly waved his sword and cried out, "Was it not on this day that Christ himself suffered death for you?" and immediately he gave the signal for attack."

Little can be related of this famous battle, which lasted from sun-rise to sun-set, "without pause or breathing time." Circumstantial details have not been transmitted to us, which can be deemed authentic. For some time the aged monarch in person directed the movements, but at length yielding to the solicitations of his son and his chieftains, he retired to his tent, where it is said he passed the time on his knees in prayer.

In the mean time Morogh, on whom the command devolved, acted as an experienced and noble warrior. At the commencement of the action the unaccustomed sight of men in armour occasioned some panic among the Irish troops, which Morogh perceiving, he, with his Dalgais, furiously assailed this formidable foe, and with such dexterity, that their armour availed them nothing, and the entire band were either dispersed or slain; wherever Morogh with his young son Turlogh appeared, the victory was his; but his career was stopped. Anrud, a Norwegian prince, challenged him to single combat, for he had slain his brother. Morogh accepted it, though with difficulty he could wield his

weapon in his right hand, weak and swollen from the execution it had made. With his left hand he grasped his antagonist, and shaking him from his coat of mail, plunged his dagger into his side. This was the last exploit of our brave hero, for at the same moment he received a like stab from the Norwegian, and they fell together.

Notwithstanding this blow, Brian's army was victorious. The Danes and their allies were routed on all sides, and the number of the slain was immense. In the midst of the route and carnage, the Danish admiral Bruadair, with a few followers, took refuge in a wood. He passed by the tent of Brian. He saw him in the attitude of prayer, alone, with hands and eyes uplifted—it was a favourable opportunity—he did not lose it. With his dagger in his hand, he rushed upon the defenceless royal veteran, and plunged it into his heart. Then holding up the reeking weapon, he cried out, “let it be proclaimed from man to man, that Brian has fallen by the hand of Bruadair.”

But why was the king thus deserted? Where was his military guard? Where were his sons and brave chieftains? The victory being gained, the routed enemy were seen flying in all directions, and in the madness of pursuit, the aged monarch was forgotten. His mourning attendants returned in time to seize the murderer, to whom they shewed no more mercy than he had done to their beloved king.

It is said that 13,000 of the Danish troops fell in this battle. Of the Leinster men 3000, and 7000 of their opponents. The number of chieftains slain were

much greater in proportion, and is accounted for by the chivalrous practice of single combat, which prevailed in those times. Among the slain were found the valiant youth Turlogh, as well as his father Morogh, and also Malmordha, king of Leinster, and his eldest son.

On the day after the battle, the surviving commanders, Tiege, the son of Brian, and the Eugenio prince, Cian, his son-in-law, collected the weak and wounded, and conveyed them to the camp, at Kilmainham.

Soon after this, a strife arose between Cian and his brother-in-law, about the succession. The former claimed the crown as his lawful inheritance, by right of alternate succession, and the seniority as a royal house, of the Eugenio over the Dalcassians. Presuming upon this claim in a peremptory manner, he demanded hostages from the sons of Brian, which they no less resolutely refused; and but for another claimant, whose pretensions vied with those of Cian, the effects of this contention would probably have been fatal. Domnal, also a Eugenio prince, equal in command, and not inferior in birthright to Cian, came forward with arguments calculated to quell the strife which had arisen, and to represent the disgrace of such a contest, while the remains of their fallen monarch, their deservedly beloved father, lay unburied in his tent. The interference of the noble Domnal had the desired effect. The angry princes were appeased, and turned their attention to the last directions and obsequies of the lamented monarch, which his

son Donogh conducted according to his wishes, and the remains, with those of Morogh and his grandson Turlogh, and others near of kin, who fell in this battle, were deposited at the north side of the cathedral of Armagh.

“ Thus fell the immortal Brian, in the eighty-eight year of his age, the most uniformly perfect character that Irish history can produce. If we consider him in his military capacity, we should suppose that the study of arms superseded every other object. In twenty-five different rencounters, and twenty-nine pitched battles, did he engage his Danish and other enemies—and victory always attended his standard. By his conduct, prudence, and bravery, he raised his country from a state of the most abject slavery, to the highest pinnacle of glory; yet his superior genius and success in war did not make him fond of it; and he preferred the way of negociation to arms, where it was admissible:—witness his relinquishing Meath to Malachy, on his resigning the monarchy. As a statesman and as a legislator, his talents were not less conspicuous. Whatever he recovered by the sword, he preserved by the prudence of his counsels, and the mildness of his administration. The whole tenor of his life proclaims, that the only object of his pursuits was to restore to his country its ancient laws and liberties. Munster had been long unacquainted with the blessings of peace, until he became its king—and when he became monarch, all Ireland partook of this happiness. The wonderful abilities of Brian made him shine in every department of the state. He

saw with his own eyes every defect in the political machine ; and his own genius found out the remedies. He gave vigour and force to the laws ; and the sons of rapine and plunder instantly disappeared. He re-established religion and letters ; and was the first Irish prince who laboured to reform and convert his Danish subjects. If he was terrible to his enemies in the field, he was mild to them in the cabinet ; and during his whole reign, a single act of cruelty or injustice cannot be laid to his charge. His great attention to every department in the exalted station he filled, did not make him forget his duty as a Christian. None were more constant and fervent in their devotions than he ; in so much, that by most of our writers he has been deemed a saint, by some a martyr. He was easy of access, and courteous and polite to all. Whilst he lived at Ball-Boiroimhe, with all the magnificence and profusion of Irish hospitality, it was tempered with that decorum and ease, that the dignity of the prince was never lost in the cheerful affability of the companion. In short, as a soldier, a statesman, a legislator, a Christian, and a scholar, he had not a superior ; and if any thing can blazon his character higher, it must be his manner of dying.—At the age of eighty-eight, when the vital powers sensibly decay ; when the languid motion of the blood mechanically affects the heart and spirits, and naturally brings on dejection—at a time when Brian himself was requested to retire to his tent from the horrors of the day, and leave the conduct of the battle to his son—at this time, and under these circum-

stances, he was told that all was lost, and himself requested to fly ! then it was that the hero and the monarch blazed forth in their utmost lustre : “ Do you,” says he, “ and my other attendants fly. It was to conquer or die I came here ; and my enemies shall not boast the killing me by inglorious wounds.” This was closing the scene with true dignity.*

Accounts have been given, which, doubting their veracity, we forbear to repeat, of Brian's royal banquetting house, his kitchens, corridors, &c., at Kinkoradh ; his munificent hospitality, and his harp, which “ played in Tara's hall,” &c.

The following account of his death is detailed in the *Leabhar Oiris*, or annals of Ireland, Anno 1113. “ As soon as Corcoran, one of Brian's aide-de-camps, perceived the armies so closely engaged, that neither Dane nor Irish were any longer distinguishable, he beseeches Brian to mount on horseback ; “ I will not,” says Brian ; “ for I shall not survive this engagement ; but go thou, together with the rest of my attendants, take horse, fly, and escape. Announce that I bequeath my soul to God, my body to Armagh, and my blessing to my son Donald O'Brien. I moreover bequeath twelve score oxen to Armagh. Proceed this night to Swords of Columkille, and let the clergy come for my body to-morrow, convey it to Duleek, sacred to S. Kianan, thence to Louth. And let Miles Mac-Keogh, Archbishop of Armagh, and successor to St. Patrick, accompanied by his clergy, come hither for my remains.”

* Character of Brian Boiroimhe. From O'Halloran.

“I perceive a body of men advancing towards us,” says the officer. “What sort of men are they,” says Brian? “Grey, naked looking men,” says he. “They are Danes completely armed,” says Brian: and rising from his seat, he seizes his sword, and sees the troop approach him, with Brodar at their head, quite cased in armour, his feet and head excepted. Brian draws his sword, and cuts off Brodar’s left leg from the knee, and his foot from the right. Brian immediately after receives a blow of an axe from Brodar on the head, in the mean time, kills the next man to Brodar, cuts off the head of the latter, and instantly after, falls himself.

It is said, that the cathedral at Killaloe, not far from Kincora, was first erected by Brian Boiroimhe. His own private guards, the Dalgais, alone carried arms in his Court. He expelled all foreigners from the kingdom who did not openly profess the Christian religion, and we afterwards find that there were Danish bishops in Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford.

Brian Boiroimhe’s first wife was Sabina, the daughter of king Aidhne, by whom he had two sons, Morogh and Tiege. After her death he married Gormlaigh, the sister of Maolmordhe, king of Leinster, and had four more sons, Donogh, Coner, Donald, and Flann.

He was bold in enterprise—heroic in achievement. His assumption of the monarchy was not the mere ambition of sovereign rule. He had a nobler purpose in contemplation. It was the union of all the provinces in one grand and powerful combination to extirpate the foreigners. For this object Brian la-

boured with brilliant success for a period of fourteen years.

Nevertheless, the Danes still kept possession of the chief maritime towns of the island, yet submitting to the authority of the monarch.

After his father's funeral, Donogh collected the small remnant of the Dalcassians who survived the bloody contest,—in all 1000, the third part of whom were in a state of great exhaustion, from their wounds being yet unhealed. On their way to Kincora, in this defenceless state, an army of 10,000 men of Leinster and Ossory came out against them, under the command of Donchath Mac-Gilla-Patrick, the prince of that country. They met at the river Burbha or Barrow, over which the king of Ossory refused them a passage, and imperiously demanded, “hostages or battle.” “Let it be battle then,” proudly replied the son of Brian, whose present dilemma did not erase from his memory, the time when this very prince was his father's prisoner, and from whom he had received hostages, and he added : “never in the memory of man was it heard that a prince of the race of Brian Boiroimhe had given hostages to a Mac-Gilla-Patrick.”

Then addressing his little band, he proposed that the weak and wounded should be separated from amongst them, and left in some safe shelter before the attack commenced, but they would not consent : they all together, unanimously declared their resolution to conquer or die with their beloved leader. The disabled prepared themselves for the unequal contest,

by binding up their wounds with fresh green moss, and supporting their backs against stakes driven into the ground; the dying dispersed among the living, held each in his feeble hand the weapon of warfare.

When their opponents and countrymen witnessed this preparation, it melted their hearts, and not being able to raise their arms against these self-devoted heroes—they threw them down, unheeding of the wrath and upbraiding of their commander. Donogh, with his followers, were allowed to pursue their march. Their progress was slow, and they were much harassed on their way, and had several skirmishes, but at length they arrived at the place of their destination, with the loss of 150 men, whose strength altogether failing, died on the journey.

When Morogh the son of Brian was slain in the battle of Clontarf, Malachy, the deposed monarch, took the command of the army, and also re-assumed the regal dignity of supreme monarch of Ireland, and immediately afterwards rallying his forces, he made a vigorous attack on the Danes at their head quarters in Dublin. During this attack the citadel was set on fire, and great part of the city destroyed.

Malachy had, however, still to fight his way—his opponents were not confined to the northern districts, and before he subdued them, Cinsiolach, now the county of Wexford, was covered with ashes, slaughter and devastation. Throughout the whole kingdom the good reign of Brian was succeeded by anarchy and confusion, and among all parties a deplorable contrast was drawn between the rival kings—Brian whom

they had lost, and Malachy whom they had re-instated. He reigned as supreme monarch in all thirty-four years ; and closed his life, it is said, in retirement in a little island upon lake Annin, in Meath.

From this period, though the Danish yoke was broken off, the evil effects of their demoralising influence still remained. The glory of Ireland had passed away, and they now plunged deeply into the crimes which they had formerly deprecated.

The death of Malachy put an end to the Irish monarchy for a considerable period ; no one claimed it, probably from the terror of the strife in which it would involve the contending parties. Brian's two sons, Tieve and Donchad, were at variance between themselves ; and in order to secure the sovereignty of Munster for himself, Donchad contrived a plot by which his brother was murdered, and he had previously effected the banishment of Turlough, the son of Teige, into Connaught. But all the means he used, and his stratagems, were of no avail in bringing about the purpose he intended. The hearts of his hitherto faithful followers were estranged from him, and they unanimously declared that a brother's murderer should never reign over them.

Forsaken of all—cast out and destitute, Donchad fled from his country, after having been compelled to surrender the kingdom of Munster to Turlough. This young man was a favourite of the chieftains, who found in him considerable merit, and all the endowments necessary for a warlike prince and wise statesman. His own kinsman, Dermot, king of Leinster,

placed him at the head of a powerful army, and sent him to invade the territories of Donchad his uncle, over whom he obtained a victory at the foot of the Ardagh mountains in 1063.

Donchad had connected himself with the English, in a second marriage to Driella, the daughter of Earl Godwin, and sister of Harold, afterwards king of England.

According to the Saxon Chronicle, Harold took refuge in Ireland after the rebellion of Godwin and his sons, against Edward the Confessor, and remained there 'all the winter on the king's security,' by whom in the year following, he was furnished with a squadron of nine ships, by means of which he made a predatory excursion along the southern coast of England. It is said, that after Donchad was compelled to surrender the kingdom of Munster to his nephew Turlough, he set out on a pilgrimage to Rome, and in the following year died in the monastery of St. Stephen.

Turlough, king of Munster, did not assume the supreme sovereignty until after the death of Dermot, king of Leinster, by whose assistance he was raised to the throne.

During the reign of Turlough in Ireland, William Rufus was king of England, by whom an application was made to Turlough a short time previous to his decease, for timber from the Irish forests to roof the palace then being erected at Westminster.

In Hanmer's Chronicles of Ireland, we find the following statement: "The fair green, or commune,

now called Osmontowne Green, was all wood, and hee that diggeth at this day to any depth, shall find the ground full of great rootes. From thence, anno 1098, King William Rufus, by license of Murchard, had that frame which made up the rooffe of Westminster Hall, where no English spider webbeth or breedeth to this day."

Strange and incredible legends were circulated respecting the death of Turlough, which took place in the 77th year of his age, and the 22nd of his reign, after a lingering illness at Kincora, the royal palace. There is no records left of the regrets of his own people, or of the esteem in which he was held by them, but we have the testimony of foreigners to his being a prince of considerable note. Gregory the 7th addressed him in a letter, under the title of "The illustrious king of Ireland." Dr. Lanigan in his Ecclesiastical History, says "This letter is much in the style of several others, which Gregory wrote to various kings, princes, &c., for the purpose of claiming not only a spiritual, but likewise a temporal and political superiority over all the kingdoms and principalities of Europe."

Lanfranc, the learned Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to Turlough, and thus addresses him, "To the magnificent king of Hibernia Tirdelvac." He thus begins his letter—"That God was mercifully disposed towards the people of Ireland, when he gave your Excellency royal power over that land, every intelligent observer must perceive. For, so much hath my brother fellow-bishop Patrick reported to me, con-

cerning your pious humility towards the good, your severe justice on the wicked, and the discreet equity of your dealings with all mankind, that though it has never been my good fortune to see you, I yet love you as if I had." This flattering preface is followed by complaints of the demoralized state into which the nation had sunk. The English primate laments, "that in Ireland, men without any canonical reason, desert their lawful wives, and take others, without any regard to the prohibited degrees of consanguinity; sometimes even marrying women who had in like manner been deserted by their husbands. Secondly, That bishops were consecrated by one bishop. Thirdly, That infants were baptized without consecrated chrism. Fourthly, That holy orders were given by bishops for money."

During the reign of Turlough, in 1078, some fugitive princes from Wales took refuge in Ireland, where they were hospitably entertained, and by means of the prince or princes of Ulster, one of them, Gryffyth ap Conan, was restored to his dominions, and took with him a number of Irish bards and harpers to improve his countrymen in their taste for music.

After the death of Turlough, Ireland again became a scene of contention. His three sons Tiege, Murkertach, and Dermot, reigned for a few months in Munster, which they had divided between them into three principalities, but this did not content them. Before the expiration of the first year, Tiege died "in the bed of his father at Kincora," and his two brothers contended sharply for the sovereignty.

This strife lasted some years, and ended in the banishment of Dermot in 1086. The sovereignty was then assumed by his elder brother, who did not however enjoy the peaceable possession of it. He had many opponents, the most powerful of whom was the head of the royal Hy-Niell race, Dumnal McLochlin, prince of Alichia, who pretended to espouse the cause of Dermot, and restore to him the kingdom of Munster. Dumnal in conjunction with the king of Connaught, took the field, and the usual effects of such conflicts ensued. The fertile plains of Munster were laid waste, Limerick burned, Imleach-Ibar, the castle of Achad and Loch Gar destroyed, and Brian Boiroimhe's beloved dwelling place, Kincora, on the embellishment of which he had expended much labour and riches, was levelled to the ground. This celebrated palace or fortress, is thus noticed by Seward, "Cancora, a rath or castle, near Killaloe, in the county of Clare, province of Munster. The only remains now visible of this ancient royal palace are the ramparts and fosse of the rath."

Murkertach in sailing up the Shannon with a numerous fleet of boats, with a savage barbarity laid waste the churches and isles along the shores of the lakes.

Twenty years after the demolition of Kincora, instigated by revenge, Murkertach led on his troops through Ulster to the peninsula of Inishowen, where the royal palace of the Hy-Niells stood. This celebrated fortress called Aileach, or the Eagle's nest, of which the remains may still be seen, was situated

in the county Donegal, on the summit of a small mountain on the southern side of the shore of Lough Swilly. It is called Grianan of Aileach, and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey of Londonderry : “ Be this as it may, the notices of Aileach preserved in the authentic annals, and historical poems, as well as the lives of saints and genealogical tracts show that it was the seat of the kings of the northern portion of Ireland, as Tara was of the southern, from a period considerably antecedent to the introduction of Christianity, down to the close of the twelfth century.”

Murkertach is said to have razed this structure to the ground, and devastated all the churches within its vicinity. He gave orders to his soldiers, that not a missile stone should be left in the palace of Aileach; and furthermore, he ordered that all should be conveyed to Limerick, a circumstance which is thus noticed in a distich of those times, “ Let not the congregations of saints hear what has reached the ears of the congregations of warriors, that all the stones of Alichia were heaped on the pack-horses of the angry king.”

In A.D. 1099, a matrimonial alliance was formed between the Norwegian king Magnus and Muckertach. The former had planned the conquest of Ireland in addition to that which he had already effected of the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. Having made his son Sigurd, king of the Isles, he contracted him in marriage to the daughter of Muckertach. At this time, a matrimonial alliance, and an alliance in arms were generally combined. This event is thus recorded

by the Welsh Chronicler Caradoc:—"Magnus, returning to the Isle of Man, which he had got by conquest, built there three castles, and then sent to Ireland to have the daughter of Muckart to his son, which being obtained, he created him king of Man." *Ad ann.* 1100.

In the chronicle of the same year, it is also said that "Arnulf, Earl of Pembroke, sent Gerald, his steward, to Muckart, king of Ireland, desiring his daughter in marriage, which was easily granted." Such applications as these manifest the high estimation in which the Irish monarch was held by the neighbouring princes. Arnulf de Montgomery was at this time collecting forces in Wales, to aid his brother, Robert de Belseme, Earl of Shrewsbury, in the rebellion against Henry I. From thence he is said to have passed over to Ireland, and not only obtained the lady in marriage, but the supplies he asked for to carry on the rebellion.

In 1102, Magnus visited Ireland, and though hospitably entertained by the monarch, who made him many rare and valuable presents, he was not well received by the natives. When he afterwards invaded their country with a fleet of fifteen ships, they contrived to draw him with some of his men, into an ambuscade, and surrounded him in such numbers, as to render a retreat to his ships impossible. In the engagement which took place, he was killed, and was buried at Down, in St. Patrick's Church.

In the contests between the rival kings Muckertach and Mac-Lochlin, the former was defeated, the royal

pavilion carried off, with stores of pearls,* and other costly treasure.

The next monarch of Ireland was Tordelvac, sometimes called the great, he had a friend and ally, Tier-nan O'Ruarc, the Lord of Breffney.

Dermot Mac-Murchad, king of Leinster, at the commencement of his career, committed an act of barbarity which drew upon himself universal detestation. He treacherously seized seventeen of the principal nobles of Leinster, some of whom he caused to be put to death, and the rest to be blinded.

In his youth Dermot loved a lady named Dervorgilla, who afterwards married the Prince of Breffney.† The husband and lover had been at variance long before this event, and the latter, instigated by revenge, contrived to carry off the wife of his hated rival, with her dowry and jewels. All were however retaken, by means of the succour afforded O'Ruarc by Tordelvac, his ally; and Dervorgilla was placed under the care of her relatives in Meath.

A short time previous to his death, Tordelvac received hostages from the king of North Munster, in acknowledgment of his sovereignty. In his will, he bequeathed all his precious jewels, his vessels of gold

* Pearls of great value have been found in the lake of Killybeg. In the *Philosophical Transactions*, the following statement of pearls found there is made by one of its writers:—"I myself saw one pearl bought for 50 shillings, that was valued at £40. A miller took out a pearl, which he sold for £10, to one who sold it to the late Lady Glenanly for £30, with whom I saw it in a necklace. She refused £80 for it from the late Duchess of Ormond."

† Breffney is a territory in the eastern part of Connaught.

and silver, his horses, his flocks, his bow and quiver, 65 ounces of gold, and 60 marks of silver, and all that he had, except his sword, his shield, and drinking cup, to be distributed among different churches. He ordered his body to be buried in the great church of Clonmacnoise.

Roderick O'Connor succeeded his father Tordelvac, in the throne of Connaught ; but to reign over a single province would not satisfy his ambitious views. He aspired to the sovereignty, but found a formidable adversary and competitor in Murtoth O'Lochlin, the king of Ulster, who obtained the monarchy, with but slight opposition. This prince, being a friend to religion, promoted the interests of the church ; and during his reign, synods were held at different places.

In 1157, the church at Mellifont, near Drogheda, was consecrated by *Gilla* Mac Lieg*, the primate. The monarch himself, with a numerous body of clergy, provincial kings and nobles witnessed the ceremony. Before the breaking up of the convocation, the monarch made offerings and gifts to the church at Mellifont, of 140 oxen or cows, 60 ounces of gold, and a townland near Drogheda, called Finn timer of the daughters. Carrol, prince of Oriel, also presented 60 ounces of gold ; and the name of Dervorgilla, the disgraced wife of the prince of Breffney, appears among those who presented gifts. Her offerings were 60 ounces of gold, with ornaments, &c.

In the year 1157, Roderic collected a fleet on the

* This Irish name is translated Gelasius.

Shannon, which the annalists say, was “such as, for the number and size of the ships, had never until that day been seen. After continuing four years, the conflict terminated in O’Lochlin’s formally ceding to Roderic the fifth part of the kingdom, which was his own province of Connaught, and receiving hostages from him. On the same occasion, upon the submission of Dermot, king of Leinster, he yielded to him his former possessions, and after this treaty O’Lochlin became the undisputed monarch of Erin. War however seems to have been then her element, and soon broke out again. The chieftains of Ulster, with Eochad at their head, rebelled against their lawful king. But this insurrection was soon quelled, and the Ulidian nobles were brought into subjection. These events occupied four years. After this, some atrociously cruel acts of revenge against Eochad and three of his adherents, are recorded as having been perpetrated by O’Lochlin, which brought about his own downfall. These acts violated the treaty of peace, and roused the indignation of the prince of Orgial, one of its guarantees, who joined to the forces of his own principality, those of Hy-Brien and Conmacne. He encountered O’Lochlin in a wild tract, near Lough Neagh, and having defeated him in battle, he was found among the slain, together with the flower of his nobility.

In the eleventh century, the gospel was introduced into Denmark, and its effects are thus described by the historian, Adam of Bremen :—

“ Look at that very ferocious nation of the Danes ;

for a long time they have been accustomed, in the praises of God, to sound alleluiah! Look at that piratical people; they are now content with the fruits of their own country. Look at that horrid region, formerly altogether inaccessible, on account of idolatry; now they eagerly admit the preachers of the word."

Mr. Milner says that Gibbon admits the truth of this passage, and consequently the happy effects of revealed religion in transforming the heart of the Dane from his state of savage ferocity, to be what he now is under the Christian dispensation. Of the change effected on the Danes at this period, the infidel Hume has thus written—"About this time that restless people learned the use of tillage, which thenceforth kept them at home, and freed the other nations of Europe from the devastations spread over them, by those piratical invaders. This proved one great cause of the subsequent settlement and improvement of the southern nations."

CHAPTER XV.

Reign of Roderick O'Connor, the last of Ireland's monarchs—

Dermot, king of Leinster, expelled from his province—

Escapes to England—Permission given to Henry II. by

Adrian IV. to invade Ireland, and other Christian islands—

The Pope's Bull, and Peter's pence—Dermot's application to

Henry II.—Letters patent granted him—Invasion of Ire-

land by the Anglo-Saxons—The city of Waterford the first

scene of action—Defeat of the Irish, and cruelty of the in-

vaders—Marriage of Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke—Attack

upon Dublin—Synod held at Armagh—English slaves ex-

ported to Ireland—Introduction of the Cesterian monks, by

Malachy, archbishop of Armagh—Monastery at Bangor

rebuilt.

BEING determined in these brief sketches to pass over the confused records of battles, as they have been transmitted to us, we shall not give those of Roderic O'Connor. Without a rival, this last of Ireland's monarchs ascended the throne in A.D. 1166. General unanimity prevailed among the states, at his inauguration. In the second year of his reign he held a general assembly at Athboy, which was attended by 13,000 horsemen, exclusive of the trains of all the provincial kings, princes and prelates.

Roderic commenced his reign under favourable

auspices, but he was a pusillanimous prince, undistinguished by any heroic act, or estimable trait of character. He began his reign by the commission of deeds of injustice and cruelty towards his own brothers, and others whose rivalry he dreaded.

During the reign of O'Lochlin, the prince of Breffney suffered a variety of injuries and wrongs from Dermot, his implacable enemy ; but when Roderic ascended the throne, he espoused the cause of his father's friend, and the Lord of Breffney found in him a powerful ally. The name of the disgraced wife of this prince has been mentioned among those who made offerings at the consecration of the church of Mellifont. Hence Dervorgilla is supposed to have been a penitent. The same may be inferred of Dermot, if an ostentatious display of promoting religious institutions were the test. None were more active than he in this work. His royal residence was at Ferns, where a considerable ruin may still be traced. In this neighbourhood, he richly endowed several monasteries and abbeys, which existed for some centuries. Besides these, he established like institutions in Dublin ; one on the present site of Trinity College, called Hoggin Green, now College Green.*

Dermot did not, by these public works, gain for himself public approbation. He was universally detested. His own subjects, and even his private vassals, deserted him and joined the forces of Breffney, Meath, and the Dano-Irish of Dublin ; and under the

* Ware—Archdall—Lanegan.

command of his rival Tiernan O'Ruarc, a formidable army invested his territories. Dermot, unable to resist such overpowering forces, fled to his castle at Ferns; sensible, however, that he could not long remain there in safety, he left this retreat, and having set fire to the town, made his escape to England, in the hope that Henry II. would grant him succour, and replace him in the principality of which he had been dispossessed.

Long before this period, Henry had fixed his eyes on Ireland, and under the specious pretext of converting the nation to Popery, he obtained from Adrian IV. that which no pontiff had any lawful right to grant, namely, his full permission to invade and subjugate not only Ireland, but all the other Christian islands, and take upon himself the right of jurisdiction, in acknowledgment of which, the Pope's bull stipulated the levying annually St. Peter's pence from every dwelling-place in this country. As a token of the Pope's right of investiture, a golden ring, richly set with an emerald, was sent by John of Salisbury, the King's envoy, which ring, with the accompanying document, were, by order of Adrian, deposited in the public archives.

From the year 1155, Henry's scheme of conquering Ireland lay dormant, other cares engrossed his attention, and during the interval, it does not appear that the Irish had the slightest suspicion that he entertained any such design. The English had never yet attempted it, although both William the Conqueror, and Henry I. had a desire to add Ireland to their

territories. Of William Rufus, Hanmer in his chronicle relates the following anecdote:—"Cambrensis in his Itinerarie of Cambria, reporteth how that King William, standing upon some high rocke in the farthest part of Wales, beheld Ireland, and said, 'I will have the shippes of my kingdome brought hither, wherewith I will make a bridge to invade this land.' Murchardt, king of Leynster, heard thereof, and after he had paused awhile, asked of the reporter, 'Hath the King, in his great threatening, inserted these words, *'if it please God.'* 'No.' Then said he, 'seeing this king putteth his trust only in man, and not in God, I fear not his coming.'"

Dermot's application to the king of England obtained for him permission to raise the forces he required to reinstate him in his principality, upon the conditions proposed by Dermot himself, that he would receive it as a fief, and render to Henry the homage of a vassal. The letters patent which were granted him run thus:—

"Henry, King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Earl of Anjou, to all his liege men, English, Norman, Welsh, and Scotch, and to all the nations under his dominion, sends greeting. As soon as the present letters shall come to your hands, know that Dermot, prince of Leinster, has been received into the bosom of our grace and benevolence. Wherefore, whosoever within the ample extent of our territories, shall be willing to lend aid towards the restoration of this prince, as our faithful and liege

subject, let such person know that we do hereby grant to him, for said purpose, our license and favour."

After many fruitless endeavours, Dermot at length found some adventurers of desperate fortunes, who agreed to his terms, and declared themselves willing to follow him. The chief of these was Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, surnamed Strongbow, from his feats in archery, in which his father also excelled. Dermot promised this nobleman his daughter Eva in marriage, and to secure to him the succession to the throne of Leinster, on condition of his own restoration, by the succours which Strongbow undertook to levy, and conduct to Ireland during the following spring. Two Norman youths of high rank, Maurice Fitzgerald, and Robert Fitzstephen, at the same time embraced the offers of Dermot, who promised to give them in fee, the town of Wexford, and two of the adjoining cantreds of land.

At the period of Ireland's history at which we have now arrived, that unhappy country was so rent by internal factions, so disorganised, so badly governed, by a pusillanimous and merely nominal monarch, continually held in check by the provincial chiefs, that an opportunity more favourable for the English invasion could not have been presented.

The O'Neill's governed Ulster; North Munster was divided among the descendants of Brian Boiromhe; South Munster among the Mac Arthys; the O'Connors ruled over Connaught; O'Ruarc, prince of Breffney, had Leitrim and the adjoining districts;

and Dermot Mac Murchard, king of Leinster, had the princes of Ossory and the Decies under his authority ; but that authority was cast off when he had recourse to England. Dermot arrived there with but sixty followers, and having secured the aid which he sought for from foreigners, the treacherous chieftain secretly returned to the country which he had betrayed. He remained all the winter in disguise and concealment at Ferns. Some of his adherents, who collected round him too prematurely, forced him to place himself at their head, and by their aid he regained that part of his former possessions called Hy-Kinsellagh. But he had not a sufficient force to encounter Roderic and O'Ruarc, whose united army took from him what he had gained, and he was driven into the woods for shelter.

To gain time, Dermot affected to throw himself on the clemency of his adversaries. He conciliated O'Ruarc by a gift of 100 ounces of gold ; and Roderic by renouncing all claim to Leinster, reserving only for himself ten cantreds, to be held in dependance upon the monarch, to whom he delivered seven hostages for his future fealty.

Thus were these powers lulled to repose, at a time when the most vigorous exertions were requisite to ward off the impending blow. Unthought of, unguarded, and altogether unprepared, the Irish coast lay open to new invaders, in the month of May, 1170. The first landing of a small party of needy adventurers caused little apprehension. Robert Fitz-Stephen, with thirty knights, his own kindred and

household, sixty men in coats of mail, and three hundred skilful archers of South Wales, did not assume a very formidable appearance. They landed within twelve miles of Wexford, at a creek called the Bann. On the following day their numbers were increased by the arrival of Maurice de Pendergast from Wales, with ten knights, and sixty archers. Dermot collected all his forces, amounting to 500 men only, and joined himself to these allies, whose approach he eagerly watched for.

The city of Wexford was their first scene of action ; its maritime locality rendering it a desirable possession for the invaders. Its circumjacent inhabitants were principally Dano-Irish. Alarmed at the unexpected arrival of their invaders, they hastily assembled, and boldly sallied forth to oppose the assault ; their courage, however, was damped on beholding the regular and formidable array of well-disciplined Norman troops. Never before had they seen such forces. The cavalry drawn up on the flank of the archers, the shining armour, and the shields of the knights, transfixed their wondering gaze, and caused such a trepidation, that instead of facing the foe, they desperately set fire to the suburbs, and made a hasty retreat into the town, which they defended in the best manner they could, by hurling down huge stones and beams of wood upon the heads of those who attempted to scale the walls ; and by this means they drove back Fitz-Stephen and his troops. This was, however, but a momentary check to the bravery of an officer, who, previously determined on death or victory, had cut off

from his followers the means of escape, by burning all the English ships which were lying at anchor.

Accordingly, on the following day, he renewed the attack, with skill, patience, and deliberation, and the town was delivered up to Dermot, who hoped to secure it to himself by fulfilling his engagements to Fitz-Stephen, and Maurice Fitzgerald, though the latter had not yet come to his aid. Harvey of Mount Maurice is also mentioned, as receiving from him in fee, that tract of country which lies between Wexford and Waterford, comprising the baronies of Forth and Bargie. These baronies contain about 60 square miles of fertile land, and the appellations of Forth and Bargie are significant of the character and situation of the ground on the sea coast, between the harbours of Wexford and Waterford. Forth means plenty; Bar, fruitful; Gie, the sea.

Behind this district runs a ridge of mountains, and before it the sea. Thus it is in a manner insulated, and cut off from much intercourse with the neighbouring districts; and this may account for its inhabitants, down to the present time, retaining many of their ancient customs and expressions.

The locality of this district, directly opposite Cardiganshire, in Wales, prompted the inhabitants on the other side of the channel to pass over, and long before the Anglo-Norman invasion, there had been a free intercourse, and an interchange of settlements, Irish families living in Wales, and Welsh residing in this part of Ireland; and from hence we find a large district in the county Wexford, called Scarla Welsh,

and another long tract of land in the neighbouring county of Kilkenny, called the Welsh mountains.

The Celtic being the language of Wales, was spoken in common by both people, and continues to this day the same, differing only in a few dialectic peculiarities.*

The new settlers were, however, suffered to establish themselves, and form a distinct community separate from the native Irish in language and manners for ages afterwards.

In the "Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy for 1788," Vallency gives an account of the vocabulary of the language of these baronies, and of a song in their peculiar dialect, which he supposes to have been handed down by tradition, from the time of the arrival of the colony in Ireland.

"The foreigners who joined the army of Dermot from Wales, have been sometimes called Flemings, of whom were some colonies, who established themselves in South Wales, during the reigns of the first and second Henry."

The forces of Dermot had increased to 3000 men, with whom he marched into Ossory. In expectation of the attack, the inhabitants had entrenched themselves within their own morasses and forests. They were, however, allured from these natural fastnesses, by the enemy feigning a retreat, and in the open level plain they were borne down by the cavalry of the foreigners, and the long battle-axes of Dermot's

* Outlines of the History of the Catholic Church in Ireland, by the Very Rev. R. Murray, D.D., Dean of Ardagh.

native infantry, which made dreadful havoc and slaughter among them. After the unequal conflict, three hundred reeking heads were borne as a trophy to the feet of Dermot, whose brutal conduct on the occasion further justifies the detestation in which he was held.

At length the monarch of Ireland was roused to some exertion. He assembled a large army of "Irish," and convoked a general council of the princes and nobles at Tara. From hence they proceeded to Dublin, where some unhappy dissension among themselves caused the northern chieftains to draw off their forces and return home. Had they all stood firm at this critical juncture, united in heart and hand, no doubt the forces of Ireland must have overpowered and driven out the invaders.

The mere report of such co-operation had intimidated Dermot, and caused him to have recourse to the most cowardly stratagem, for his own preservation. Nature had encircled his retreat at Ferns with almost impassable barriers ; high precipices, deep morasses and woods, such as must stop the progress of any army. He added to these, artificial pits and trenches. No troops remained with him but an inconsiderable band of foreigners, when Roderic advanced with O'Ruarc, the Dano-Irish, and provincial forces. At their first approach, the king of Leinster's Irish followers forsook him, regarding him not as their friend, but that of the stranger ; and having arranged themselves under the banner of the monarch, the traitor and his allies would have soon been in their

power, had they been blessed with a firm and zealous leader. But Roderic had not even the common policy which was requisite for his own preservation, as well as that of his country. Instead of exerting himself to expel the invaders, he tamely tampered, first with Fitz-Stephen, and then with Dermot, in hopes of dissolving the alliance they had formed. Failing in this attempt, he entered into a compact with the latter, meanly offering to yield up to him and to his heirs for ever, all right and title to the sovereignty of Leinster, with the accustomed stipulation of rendering to him, as supreme monarch, the homage of a liege subject.

This disgraceful treaty was ratified, by Dermot's delivering up Connor, his favourite son, as hostage, to whom Roderic engaged that he would give his daughter in marriage, thus forming a family alliance. Moreover, all those possessions which Dermot had for high treason forfeited, were to be restored, without any concession on his part, save only a private declaration that he would give no more encouragement to foreigners to land on Erin's shores. He also promised to dismiss those who were now in his service, as soon as he should find himself settled peaceably in his province.

Far different, however, was the conduct of this treacherous prince, whom neither the law of God or man could bind to do justly. He only waited for the retreat of the pusillanimous monarch, with all his forces, to re-commence his career of spoliation, by the help of his foreign auxiliaries; and A.D. 1170, when he heard that Maurice Fitz-Gerald had landed in the

port of Wexford, with ten knights, thirty horsemen, and about a hundred archers, he hastened in person to receive him.

Without the aid of Fitz-Stephen, who was then busily occupied in the erection of a castle near Wexford,* Dermot led on these foreigners, with all the forces he could muster, to make an attack on the people of Dublin, who had never willingly submitted to his detested yoke; but had raised one of their own race to be their ruler, whose name was Mac Torcill. Dermot, hurried on by ambition and revenge, made a vigorous attack, and by burning and wasting, compelled the wretched inhabitants to yield to any terms proposed.

Dermot's next proceeding was to take part in a rebellion against the monarch, hoping thereby to obtain the supreme government for himself. Again he was successful, and compelled Roderic, after a few feeble efforts, to make good his retreat to Connaught. Dermot, proud of conquest, and encouraged by his confederates, renewed his invitation to Strongbow to come over, with all the forces he could muster, in order that the decisive blow might be struck, which would make the country their own.

This nobleman was very willing to obey the summons, and only waited for a favourable opportunity, and the sanction of King Henry II. Having obtained

* This castle is built on a promontory of lime-stone rock, on the river, and is the first Norman fortification ever erected in Ireland. It is still a very curious and conspicuous object, commanding the navigation of the Slaney.

it rather evasively, he prepared for the expedition, May, 1171, and sent before him ten knights and seventy archers, led on by Raymond le Gros, or Raymond Fitz-William, the real name of this young officer, who was the second son of William Fitz-Gerald, Lord of Carew, and nephew to the two Norman chieftains, Maurice Fitz-Gerald, and Robert Fitz-Stephen. This detachment landed under a rock near Waterford, at a place called Dundolf. Hervey of Mount Maurice joined them with a few knights. Here they erected a temporary fort, in which they hoped to maintain themselves until the arrival of Strongbow.

In the mean time the people of Waterford took the alarm, and assembled, with all the assistance they could obtain, under the command of O'Phelan, prince of the Decies, and O'Ryan of Idrone, hoping to force back the intruders before a reinforcement could reach them. For this purpose, 3000 men crossed the river Suir, which divides Leinster from Desmond, in order to attack the English, and were bravely met by Raymond le Gros, who sallied from his fort with his little garrison—but he was driven back by overpowering multitudes, who were entering his fort with him. Rendered desperate by such emergency, the courageous young officer suddenly faced his pursuers, and in the very gateway plunged his dagger into the breast of the foremost, triumphantly calling on his friends to follow his example. The mandate was obeyed with such success, that their panic-struck assailants fled before them. It is recorded that five hundred men were slain on this occasion, and many more were

seized and dragged up the rocks, from which they were precipitated into the sea. Seventy of the principal men of Waterford were detained prisoners, for whose ransom large rewards were offered by the citizens, who would even have surrendered the city on the condition of obtaining their freedom.

A council of war was held by the English on the terms proposed, but there was a division among the two chiefs. Raymond, who would have taken the ransom and liberated the prisoners, thus reasoned—"Recollect," he said, "they are not enemies now, but our brother men; not rebels, but conquered foes—conquered by adverse fortune, while standing in defence of their own country. Honourable was the cause for which they stood." The policy of Hervey was opposed to these lenient measures. He was for "striking terror into the Irish." With severity he exclaimed, "Let our victory be so used, as that the destruction of these now in our hands should act as a warning to others; and that in future this lawless and rebellious nation may be struck with terror by the example."

Unhappily this cruel advice prevailed, and the unoffending prisoners were carried to the rocks; their limbs were broken, and they were dashed into the foaming billows below. This was the commencement of a long train of injustice and cruelty, which instilled into the Irish that hatred against their Saxon conquerors, which has not yet been subdued.

Three months after this dreadful event, on the eve of the feast of St. Bartholomew, Strongbow, with his

army, landed near Waterford, and were joined by Raymond, with his detachment. Without waiting for Dermot, they assaulted the city, and met with an unexpected and resolute resistance. Twice were they repulsed, chiefly by the valiant efforts of O'Phelan, prince of the Decies. At length a breach was made through a small house, which rested upon props of timber in the east angle, outside the walls. This being perceived by Raymond, he ordered the timbers to be hewn asunder; and the fall of the house in consequence, made a breach, which opened a passage for the troops, who poured into the city, and a general slaughter ensued.

No distinction of sex or age was regarded, no mercy shewn in the devastation which the streets of Waterford exhibited, the rapacious besiegers rushed through the town, cutting down all who opposed their work of carnage and plunder.

At the time of this assault, Waterford was considered one of the most important and opulent cities in Ireland, inferior only to Dublin. Situated on the south side of the river Suir, it was surrounded by a ditch and walls, enclosing a triangular space, and at each angle there was a fortified tower. The inhabitants were chiefly Ostmen. On the first alarm of invasion, the Danish governor, prince Reginald, prepared for a vigorous resistance, but when this was no longer in his power, he, with O'Phelan, prince of the Decies, took refuge in one of the towers, which is even now in good preservation, and still known by the name of Reginald's tower. From this the two princes

were dragged forth, and at the moment when the sword of the executioner was raised to take away their lives, the king of Leinster arrived with Eva his daughter, and his liegemen, Maurice Fitzgerald and Fitzstephen. At the intercession of Dermot, the captive princes were liberated, and he joyfully hailed the arrival of his grand confederate and future son-in-law, Strongbow, to whom he presented his daughter, and the nuptials were solemnized, it is said, in Reginald's tower, amid the wreck and ruin of the smoking city. There was no time on this occasion for the celebration of nuptial festivities, the din of arms summoned the chieftains to battle; they left a few troops to garrison Waterford, and with the whole of their united forces marched towards Dublin. Hesculph, the governor, had announced his defection from Dermot, and his resolution to take part with Roderic, who had assembled an immense army at Clondalkin, a few miles from the city of Dublin. In order to obstruct the progress of Dermot and Strongbow, the native troops were dispersed among the woods and defiles approaching the city. Being apprised of this, the confederate army, small in number, compared with that of Roderic, avoided these passes, and winding along the mountain tops of Glendalough, unexpectedly arrived under the walls of Dublin. After three days skirmishing with Roderic's troops, this tumultuous force dispersed, and left none but the Ostmen of Dublin to contend with the king of Leinster and his English allies.

In this emergency, the terrified inhabitants had recourse to their good archbishop Laurence O'Toole,

who became their mediator, and by representing to Dermot their deep penitence, because of their late defection, together with an offer of thirty hostages, as pledges of their future fidelity, they hoped he might appease his wrath, and induce him to desist from farther hostilities. But there was nothing to be gained from the merciless Dermot ; evasive answers were all that Laurence could obtain, and before the conference was concluded, Raymond and Miles de Cogan, a valiant English knight, scaled the walls with their hardy Britons, and the unprepared garrison became the victims of their cruelty ; many, rather than fall into the hands of their pursuers, plunged into the river and were drowned. Hesculph with a considerable body of the citizens, made their way to some vessels in the harbour, and escaped to the northern islands.

Dublin being now in the hands of Dermot and Strongbow, they appointed Miles de Cogan the governor, and carried their arms into Meath, in order to expel O'Ruarc, on whom Roderic had conferred the eastern part of that province.

Although Roderic was aware of the intention of Dermot to possess himself of the supreme government of all Ireland, he did not attempt by open force to oppose him, but again meanly had recourse to negotiation, and by reproaches and threatenings tried to intimidate him. These were, however, altogether useless ; though the life of his son, whom Dermot had given up to Roderic as a hostage, was to be the forfeit, this inexorable and ambitious man would yield to

no terms; and it is said, that Roderic enraged at his refusal, ordered "the head of one of the finest and most amiable youths in Leinster to be struck off," and sent to his father. But this impotent act of revenge brought upon himself universal detestation, and farther than ever removed from him the means of retrieving his losses.

Still the free born Irish people could not tamely submit to the yoke of the strangers, nor to the worthless prince who had invited them to invade their country—a general alarm was spread throughout the island, and the people began to reflect upon their conduct, and to consider whether the calamities with which they were threatened might not be a judgment from heaven for their offences. To inquire whether there might not be some particular cause for this calamity, a formal synod was convened at Armagh, and after much deliberation, as the chronicles state, "the synod declared that this calamity was to be held as an infliction of divine justice, on account of the sins of the Irish people; and more especially, because that in former times they used to make bond-slaves of the English whom they had purchased as well from merchants, as from robbers and pirates—a crime for which God now took vengeance upon them, by delivering them into like bondage themselves."

"Acting upon the spirit of these humane and Christian views, the synod unanimously decreed and ordered, that all the English throughout the island, who were in a state of slavery, should be restored to their former freedom."

Cambrensis, bishop of St. David's, who gives this account, adds, "that the English by a common vice of their country, had a custom to sell their children and kinsfolk into Ireland, although they were neither in want nor extreme poverty." The English reader after this must never charge the Irish of that age with being rude and barbarous, because he will be bid to look at home.*

"Slaves were exported from England in such numbers, that it seems to have been a fashion among the people of property in Ireland and other neighbouring countries to be attended by English slaves."†

Bristol was the great mart of this traffic. Numbers of young English slaves, of both sexes, were shipped from this port to Ireland, tied together by ropes, as a fact which is narrated by William of Malmsbury.

In A. D. 1140, Malachy introduced the Cistercian order of monks into Ireland, under the direction of St. Bernard, and formed establishments for them at Mellefont, Newry, Bective, Boyle, Baltinglass, Nenagh, and Cashel.

Ireland was called the isle of saints before any pope ever assumed the power of creating saints on his own authority. Malachy, archbishop of Armagh, and Laurence of Dublin, were the first we hear of who received canonization in Ireland, and they lived in the twelfth century; and the first pope who conferred that dignity was pope John XV., by whom Uldaric, bishop of Augsburg, was canonized in the year 993.

* Dr. Warners History of Ireland, vol. 1, book 2.

† Seyer's History of Bristol.

We are distinctly told by ancient Roman historians that the first palls that ever came into Ireland were brought thither in the year 1151, by John Papiro, legate of pope Eugenius. The pall had been sent so early as the seventh century, to the Romish archbishop of the Anglo-Saxon church.*

Pall is the mantle of an archbishop. "An archbishop ought to be consecrated and anointed, and after consecration he shall have the pall sent him."

In addition to those religious institutions founded by Malachy, Camden gives the following account of his monastery at Bangor.

"A rich and mighty man gave a place called Banchor unto Malachy, to build, or rather re-edify there a monastery. It had been a most noble house before time, under the first father and founder Congel, educating many thousand monks, and likewise the head of many monasteries; a holy place in truth, and a breeder of many saints, most plenteously bringing forth fruit unto God, and the scions thereof replenished Ireland and Scotland. From thence came St. Columba to these parts of ours here in France, who built the monastery of Luaovium, which grew to a mighty multitude. So great, by report, was the ancient glory of Banchor monastery, that the solemnity of divine service held out continually in one quire after another, so that there was not one moment of time, night nor day, without singing praises.

* Church History of Ireland, by Rev. Robert King, A. B.

“Malachy, both in regard of the noble name it bare, and of its ancient dignity, especially liked this place, although it was destroyed, as minding to replant it, like unto a garden or paradise. He regarded it, because many bodies of saints slept there; and to say nothing of those who died peaceably, it is reported that 900 were slain, in one day, by the Danes. Truly the possessions of that place were great. But Malachy, contenting himself with the site only of this holy place, surrendered wholly to another the land and possessions. For from the time that the monastery was destroyed, the place, with the lands and livings thereunto appertaining, were held by some one, who was also ordained by election, and called abbots, as in old time, though in reality not so. And when many advised not to alienate the possessions, but to retain the whole together, Malachy refused, for he sought not earthly possessions, and caused one to be chosen for them by election, according to the custom. Within a few days, there was the oratory or church finished, of timber pieces, made smooth, but fitly and firmly knit together, (a Scottish kind of work, fair and beautiful enough). Afterwards Malachy thought good to have a church built of stone, proportioned like to those which he had seen built in other countries; and when he had begun to lay the foundation, the native inhabitants made a wonder thereat, because there was not found in that land, as yet, such manner of buildings, and thereupon one cried out, ‘O good sir, what mean you to bring in this new fashion unto

our countries? Scots we are and not French; what vanity is this? what need was there of such work; so superfluous, so proud, and so glorious?’

“Malachy, in the thirtieth year of his age, was brought in, and presented a consecrated bishop of Connor.”

CHAPTER XVI.

Henry II. jealous of Strongbow's successes in Ireland, stops his progress—The Earl endeavours to pacify him by a submissive letter—Dermot's Death at Ferns—Hesculph's return from the Orkney islands, and attack upon Dublin—His defeat, capture, and death—Roderic with a great army invests Dublin—Robert Fitz-Stephen besieged in his castle on Carrick—Distress compels the garrison of Dublin to make a sally—The total dispersion of Roderic's troops, and march of Strongbow to Wexford—Henry requires the attendance of the Earl in England—He obeys the summons, and is reconciled to the King—Henry embarks at Milford, and lands at Waterford, October 18, 1172—Submission of the Provincial Princes to the King of England—Christmas festivities at Dublin—Return of the King to England in spring—Pope Alexander's Letter—First public announcement to the Irish, in 1175, of the grant from Pope Adrian of their country to Henry II.—Confirmation of this grant to John, by a Bull of Pope Urban—Purity of faith, and ecclesiastical independence of the ancient Irish Church.

STRONGBOW's successes in Ireland excited the jealous indignation of Henry, whose mandate he had disobeyed in the whole of his proceedings. He therefore began to take measures for frustrating the Earl in any farther attempts to aggrandise himself. For this purpose the king issued his royal edict, prohibiting all traffic and intercourse between England and Ireland,

and commanding the return of all his subjects to their own homes, before the ensuing festival of Easter, under the penalty of perpetual banishment, and the forfeiture of their estates. By this interdict, all the supplies and resources which Strongbow was continually receiving from England, were suddenly stopped, and numbers of his knights and soldiers deserted him.

The Earl thus losing his friends, and being deprived of needful aid from his native land, was in great perplexity. Having called a council, it was agreed that Raymond le Gros should be sent with letters to pacify the king, who was then in Normandy. Strongbow addressed Henry in the following submissive terms:—
“Most puissant Prince, and my dread Sovereign. I came into this land with your majesty’s leave and favour (as far as I remember), to aid your servant, Dermot Mac Morogh. What I have won, was with the sword; what was given me I give you; I am yours, life and living, at your command.”

Henry, still incensed against the Earl, did not deign to answer the letter, though he delayed Raymond until other troubles occupied his attention. The assassination of Thomas à Becket, just at this time, brought universal odium upon him. In the meantime Strongbow was beset with new difficulties, by the death of his father-in-law, and subsequent desertion of all his Irish followers, with the exception of Donald Kavanagh, the son of Dermot,* and one or two inconsiderable chieftains.

* “Dermot Mac-Morrough was the last king of Leinster; the O’Cavanagh’s trace their descent from him, and styled

According to the Irish annals, Dermot died at Ferns, of some loathsome disease, hardened and impenitent to the last, an object of horror and disgust. Strongbow took possession of his principality, in right of Eva, his wife, though by the old laws of Ireland, the right of inheritance was confined to the male issue. During his absence from Dublin, on this occasion, Hisculph, the late governor returned there. He entered the port with sixty sail of vessels from the Orkney islands. These were all well manned and armed. From Cambrensis we learn that their captain was distinguished by the surname of Mad John, or John the Furious, from his rash and reckless bravery. They easily effected a landing, and are thus described by the above mentioned historian :—

“ His troops being all mighty men of war, and well appointed after the Danish manner, being harnessed with good brigandines, jacks, and shirts of mail ; their shields, bucklers, and targets were round, coloured red, and bound with iron ; and as they seemed in arms, so they were no less in minds, iron-strong and mighty.”

They marched in battle-array towards the east gate of the city. Miles Cogan, the governor, with comparatively but a handful of men, sallied forth and gave them battle. Many a brave soldier fell on both sides, and the bloody conflict had nearly terminated in favour

themselves The Mac-Morrough, till the reign of Henry VIII. when Charles O’Cavanagh, on surrendering his title to the king, was, for the king, constituted governor of the castle of Ferns.”—*Hibernia Dominicana*.

of the Danes, when from the south-postern gate issued Richard Cogan, the brother of Miles, with a dauntless company, who encompassed the Danes, at the same time uttering loud shouts which amazed and confounded them. Being thus assailed in front and rear by the two brothers, they threw down their arms, and as many as could escape fled toward their ships. Mad John was slain, and Hesculph taken prisoner. He was however prodigal of life; for by boasting of his past exploits, and his resolution to give greater proofs still of his own valour, and that of his Irish followers, in the hearing of Miles Cogan, he provoked the governor to order him to be beheaded.

This partial success on the side of the English was far from retrieving their sinking fortune. Their numbers were much diminished, and the failure of supplies and assistance from England was every day more seriously felt. The Irish, aware of the favourable opportunity, consulted how they might best lay siege to Dublin, and recover it out of the hands of the enemy. Their most active and efficient adviser was Laurence O'Toole, the archbishop. He wrote to Roderic; to Godfrey, king of the Isle of Man; to the princes of the neighbouring isles, (many of whom were Irishmen), and also to all the princes and lords of the provinces throughout Ireland, exhorting them to rally round their monarch, that by one combined and determined effort, they might expel from their country the dangerous invaders.

The bishop's character and influence gained all he wished for. Godfrey and the other island chieftains

assembled their forces, and with thirty ships they blocked up the harbour of Dublin, while Roderic with a great army encamped near the city. Even the archbishop himself commanded a troop on this occasion, (although, as the historian observes, it had been more befitting his holy calling to have assisted with his prayers than his arms).

For two months an army of 30,000 men invested the city without attempting any assault; and by precluding all supplies of provisions, they hoped that the garrison would be compelled to yield. Strongbow by this time had returned to Dublin, and Raymond le Gros had also come from England. In addition to their calamities, they received intelligence that Fitzstephen, in his fort of Carrick,* near Wexford, was besieged by an army 3000 strong, under the conduct of Donald, prince of Limerick, the son-in-law of Dermot Mac Morrogh, and that if not relieved he could not hold out more than three days.

Distressed on every side, and in a state of great perplexity, the English held a consultation, when Maurice Fitzgerald, animated with the courage which imminent danger often calls forth, addressed the earl and other chieftains as follows—"Men of tried valour, we came not into this land, neither were we brought hither to be idle, nor to live delicately. We came to seek adventures and fortune. We had got upon the top of the wheel, but fortune wheels about. We must have our ups and downs. That which is brought low will rise

* Or Carrig, i. e. Rock.

again : such is the mutability of the sons of men. The course of all human events is fickle and uncertain. There is an interchange of prosperity and adversity. After day comes night, and when night is gone day comes again. The sun rises and spreads his beams over the face of the earth : he holds his course still, though veiled with clouds and night. We have had our triumphs. We flew upon the wings of fortune ; now they are clipped, and we are fallen. Our sun is clouded. Our sovereign frowns upon us. Our enemies inclose us on every side. Our provisions fail. We have no way of escape by sea or by land. Our friends cannot help us. Our enemies are ready to devour us. But be not disheartened ; if God be with us, we care not who is against us. But alas ! for Fitz Stephens, my brother, whose valiantness, whose noble enterprise broke the ice, and made way for us into this island. He is now shut up in a weak hold, with his wife and children. Slender and feeble are his means to keep out so great a force.”*

After him, thus spoke Raymond le Gros :—“ This is no time to sit in council or waste in speeches ; yet the words of my uncle are wisely spoken, and call forth achievements. Let us no longer deliberate. Delays are dangerous. We are hemmed in on every side : to fly is impossible ; to remain is starvation. England dares not now relieve us. Ireland defies us. We have no resource but to face our enemies. Let us prove to them from what race we are sprung. We

* Hanmer's Chronicle.

must act resolutely. Our movements must be wary, secret, and sudden. Let us issue out, and give the onset."

Enough was said to fire their courage. Determined on death or victory, the men flew to arms. There were three bodies of horse. Raymond le Gros, with twenty knights, formed the vanguard; Miles de Cogan, with thirty knights, drew up in the centre; and Strongbow, with Maurice Fitz-Gerald, and forty knights, gentlemen, and common soldiers, took their place in the rear. This was the little army, not exceeding six hundred men, composed of the esquires, knights, and some infantry, which was to cut their way through 30,000 of their enemies. They sallied forth at an early hour in the morning, and met with little resistance. Past experience ought to have taught the Irish to be watchful; but being slow to learn, they were again taken by surprise—unsuspicious of danger, unprepared and in confusion, having no commander to guide or order them. Roderic, trusting to numbers, and unapprehensive of danger, was indulging in the luxury of a bath, from which he hardly escaped with his life: without any covering but his mantle thrown round him, he fled with his followers, who on every side were trying to escape from their pursuers. The slaughter was immense, and the pursuit was not given over until the shades of evening forced the victors back to the city, which they re-entered laden with spoil, and provisions more than sufficient for a year's subsistence. Leaving Dublin to the guardianship of Miles de Cogan, Strongbow has-

tened towards Wexford to relieve Fitz-Stephen ; but on his march he encountered an unexpected opposition. In passing through the county of Carlow, at a place called Idrone, where there was a defile, in which O'Regan, the lord of the country, lay in ambush with a considerable force ; and watching their opportunity when the English were hemmed in by woods, precipices and morasses, they rushed from their retreat with loud and menacing cries. The English at first, were thrown into confusion, but soon rallied under their leaders. There was a sharp contest, which ended in the death of O'Regan, whose breast was pierced by the arrow of Nicholas the monk. His disheartened troops took flight, and left the pass open for their enemies to pursue their victorious course.

When Strongbow had arrived within a short distance of Wexford, the painful intelligence reached him, that after a vigorous defence, Fitz-Stephen had been betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He had bravely repulsed every attack on his fort, until by stratagem he was persuaded to deliver it up. Having solicited a parley, the besiegers, with the most solemn asseverations and oaths, declared that a complete victory had been gained by the Irish at Dublin ; that the city was in their hands ; and the whole garrison, including the Earl, Fitz-Gerald, and Raymond, had been cut to pieces, and that Roderic was actually on his march to exterminate him and his followers.

By these plausible mis-statements they induced him to deliver himself up to them ; and moreover, professing great attachment to him on account of the great

kindness he had shewn them, they offered to favour his escape, and before the arrival of Roderic, engaged to convey him and his garrison safely to Wales. Fitz-Stephen fell into the snare; and no sooner had he surrendered himself, than his pretended friends threw off the mask. They began the work of cruelty and slaughter by putting the soldiers to death; and loading Fitz-Stephen with chains, together with his principal officers, they cast them into prison. Just at this moment of their triumph, they were thrown into consternation by hearing that Strongbow, with his victorious army, was close to their city walls. Immediately they set fire to the town, and with their prisoners, escaped to an island lying off the harbour, called Beckerin, Beg-Erin, or Little Erin.

From this retreat, the Irish despatched messengers to Strongbow, warning him that if he made any attempt to rescue their prisoners, their lives should be the immediate forfeit. Strongbow thus deterred from taking the measures he was bent upon for the release of his friends, was obliged to leave them to their fate, while he proceeded to Waterford, when he found his uncle, Hervey de Monte Maurice, had just arrived from England, with letters from the king, requiring his prompt attendance at Newnham in Gloucestershire, where Henry then was.

The Earl only waited for the first fair wind to obey this mandate; and on his arrival at the English court, he was so fortunate as to appease the displeasure of his sovereign by the renewal of his homage and the surrender of Dublin with the adjoining territories;

and also, all the other sea-port towns and forts of which he had taken possession, only retaining for himself and his heirs, with Henry's consent, some places for which he promised to render homage and fealty to the king of England. At this time, Henry having formed the determination of conquering Ireland, restored to the earl his estate in England, which had been seized as forfeited to the crown, in consequence of his disobedience to the royal mandate. Hanmer says,* "I find recorded, that when King Henry II. made preparation for the conquest of Ireland, Richard Strongbow, Earl of Strigul,† marshal of England, being reconciled to the king, had all his lands in England and Normandy restored unto him again; and, thereupon, the king made him seneschal of Ireland."

King Henry embarked at Milford, attended by Strongbow, William Fitz-Aldelm, Humphry de Bohun, Hugh de Lacy, Robert Fitz-Bernard, and other nobles. His army, which filled four hundred ships, amounted to 4,000 men at arms, and 300 knights. They landed at *Croch*, a place near Waterford, supposed to be Crook, over against Hook Tower. According to Hanmer's Chronicle, "Anno 1172,‡ upon St. Luke's day, October 18, Henry II. entered the haven of Waterford, (so writeth Cambrensis that lived then), and being landed to the hearty joy of the English, and feigned welcome of the Irishmen," by whom

* British Chronicles, Crettan and Stratflur.

† Now Chepstow.

‡ The same date is given by Rapin, Hume, Camden, &c.

Robert Fitz-Stephens was brought in irons, and presented to the king, charged with many unjust and malicious accusations ; representing him “ as one who had made war without his sovereign’s permission in Ireland, and had been thereby the occasion of much enmity and wrong.” Henry’s policy at this time being to dissemble with the dissemblers, he remanded Fitz-Stephen to prison and to chains, for “daring to attempt the conquest of Ireland without his leave.”

By putting on the semblance of the protector rather than the conqueror of Ireland, he, Henry, gained the confidence of the Irish ; and as he advanced through the country with a pompous train, many of the kings met him to do homage. Amongst the foremost was the prince of Desmond at the head of his army, who came to offer tribute and submission. Near Cashel, on the banks of the river Suir, Donald O’Brian, king of Thomond, met Henry, and surrendered the city of Limerick, and having sworn fealty, became his tributary. In like manner, all the princes and chief men of Munster submitted to his authority, and after each prince had given up his territory, it was restored to him again by the king, who received all courteously, and dismissed them laden with royal gifts. O’Phelim states, that the prince of the Decies and Fitzpatrick of Ossory also, on this occasion, acknowledged Henry as their liege lord and sovereign. On his return to Waterford, Henry permitted his barons to intercede for Fitz-Stephen, who was liberated on his surrender of Wexford and its territory

to the king, he being allowed to retain his other acquisitions.

Henry having appointed governors over Cork, Limerick, and the other ceded cities, led his troops to Dublin. The magnificence of the royal army, pursuing their slow progress through the country, filled the inhabitants with astonishment and awe; and Henry was again met on his march by princes and chieftains, who did homage to him. All those of Leinster voluntarily submitted to his authority; and even O'Ruarc now deserted his friend Roderic. Destitute as was the Irish monarch of resources, and abandoned by his vassals, he determined, if possible, to defend his own province. For this purpose he placed his Connaught troops in entrenchments on the banks of the Shannon, and when Hugh de Lacy and William Fitz-Aldelm were deputed to meet him, he rejected every overture they made to induce him to submit; and all the princes of Ulster followed his example.

When Henry arrived in Dublin, no edifice was found capable of containing him and his train; so that for the observance of Christmas festivals, a temporary structure was erected of smooth twigs or wattles, after the Irish fashion. Hammer thus describes the entertainment:—"Christmas drew on, which the king kept at Dublin, where he feasted all the princes of the land, and gave them rich and beautiful gifts. They repaired thither out of all parts of the land, and wonderful it was to the simple people to behold the majesty of so puissant a prince; the pastime, the sport, and the mirth, and the continual music, the

masking, mumming, and strange shows, the gold, the silver and plate, the precious ornaments, the dainty dishes, furnished with all sorts of fish and flesh, the wines, the spices, the delicate and sumptuous banquets, the orderly service, the comely march, and seemly array of all the officers; the gentlemen, the esquires, the knights and lords in their rich attire; the running at tilt in complete harness, with barbed horses, where the staves shivered and flew in splinters, safer to sit than upon an Irish pillion, that playeth cross and pile with the rider, the plain honest people admired, and no marvel."

"Henry II. having thus conquered Ireland without drawing a sword, or shedding one drop of blood, (as it became his princely calling), turned himself to reform the state ecclesiastical."

Henry's first winter in Ireland was rendered gloomy and unpleasant by unusually tempestuous weather, which prevented all intercourse with countries beyond the seas. This kept the king's mind in a state of anxiety and suspense. He intended to have remained in Ireland until the ensuing summer; but having received unfavourable intelligence from the continent, he hastened his departure early in the spring. These letters informed him, that Pope Alexander the Third had sent two cardinals, Albertus and Theodinus, to inquire into the circumstances of the death of Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury. He regretted leaving his newly acquired dominion in such an unsettled state; and being still envious and jealous of the influence and authority gained by Strongbow, he took him to England

at this time, and in his stead appointed Hugh de Lacy governor or seneschal of Dublin. After having made some other appointments and arrangements, such as the shortness of the time would permit, he sailed from Wexford on Monday, at six in the morning, in Easter week, and landed the same day at St. David's, in Wales.

In order to establish himself and his heirs in the possession of Ireland, Henry sent ambassadors to Rome, first to clear himself of the death of Thomas à Becket, and secondly, to obtain the Pope's sanction for his retaining Ireland: to which Alexander returned the following answer,—

“ Alexander the bishop, the servant of the servants of God, to his dearly beloved son, the noble king of England greeting, grace and apostolic benediction. Forasmuch as things given and granted upon good reason, by our predecessors, are to be allowed, ratified, and confirmed; we, well considering and pondering the grant and privilege for, and concerning the dominion of the land of Ireland to us appertaining, and lately given by Adrian our predecessor: we, following his steps, do in like manner confirm, ratify, and allow the same, reserving and saving to St. Peter, and to the Church of Rome, the yearly pension of one penny out of every house, as well in England as in Ireland. Provided also, that the barbarous people of Ireland, by your means, be reformed and recovered from that filthy life and conversation; that as in name, so in life and manners they may be Christians; and that as

that rude and disordered church, being by you reformed, the whole nation may also, with the profession of the name, be in acts and deeds, followers of the same." This document, Hanmer says, is found in the Book of Howth.

The adherents of Rome, acknowledging the Pope's supremacy, cannot dispute the right of England over Ireland, after such a grant as this. They only who never submitted to the Papal yoke, and still protest against its monopolizing and intolerant enactments, can with propriety object.

In A.D. 1175, the first public announcement was made to the Irish, that the kingdom of Ireland had been granted to Henry II. by Pope Adrian, in the year 1151, which grant had been confirmed to the king of England by Alexander III. under the same condition, namely, the levying of Peter's pence from the people. Until now, Henry had not published this document on account of the aspersions that it contained against the religion of the people of Ireland, which he thought might exasperate them to a stronger resistance to his authority. But now that all hope of a quiet submission was at an end, the king resorted to the Papal authority as a means of enlisting the clergy on his side.

William Fitz-Adelm, and Nicholas, the prior of Wallingford, were the persons appointed to carry these documents to Ireland, which were read publicly at a synod of bishops, who were assembled for that purpose. Having executed their commission, the

two agents went to Normandy, where Henry then was, in order to report the state of affairs in Ireland, and the cause of its increased disorders.

The following extract from Camden's Ireland shews how Pope Urban, by his usurped and unscriptural authority, confirmed the grant of this country to John, Henry's son and successor :—

“ This King Henry afterward delivered up the seignory of Ireland into the hands of his son John ; which conveyance Pope Urban confirmed by his Bull, and in testimony of his confirmation, sent him a crown of peacock's feathers, braided and embroidered with gold : whom, after he was established in his kingdom, divers authors affirm to have granted by his Charter or Patent, Ireland and England, both unto the Church of Rome, to be held of it ever after in fee, and to have received it again from the Church as a feudatory. Also to have bound his successors to pay three hundred marks unto the Bishop of Rome. But that most worthy and famous Sir Thomas More, who took the Pope's part, even unto death, affirmeth this to be false. For he writeth, that the Romanists can shew no such grant ; that they never demanded the aforesaid ; and that the kings of England never acknowledged it. But, by his leave, as great a man as he was, the case stood otherwise, as evidently appeareth by the Parliament records, the credit whereof cannot be impugned. For in an assembly of all the states of the realm, in the reign of Edward the Third, the Lord Chancellor of England proposed and related, that the Pope would judicially sue the king of

England, as well for the homage as the tribute, which was to be yielded for England and Ireland, to the performance whereof, King John in times past had obliged himself and his successors ; and of this point, which he put to question, required their opinion. The bishops desired to have a day by themselves to consult about this matter. The nobles likewise, and the people or commonalty. The day after they all met, and with one general accord ordained and enacted, ‘ That forasmuch as neither King John, nor any other king whatsoever, could impose such servitude upon the kingdom, but with the common consent and assent of a parliament ; which was not done : and whatsoever he had passed was against his oath at his coronation, by him in express words religiously taken before God. Therefore, in case the Pope should urge this matter, they were most ready, to the utmost of their power, to resist him resolutely with their bodies and goods.’ ”

The following quotation from Hume’s History of England is worthy of observation, as it corroborates the statements which have been already advanced concerning the introduction of Popery into Ireland : —“ Adrian III., who then filled the Papal chair, was by birth an Englishman ; and being, on that account, disposed to oblige Henry, he was easily persuaded to act as master of the world, and to make, without any hazard or expense, the acquisition of a great island to his spiritual jurisdiction. The Irish had by precedent missions from the Britains, been converted to Christianity ; and what the Pope regarded as the surest

mark of their imperfect conversion, they followed the doctrines of their first teachers, and had never acknowledged any subjection to the see of Rome. Adrian, therefore, in the year 1156, issued a Bull in favour of Henry; in which, after premising that the prince had ever shewn an anxious care to enlarge the church of God on earth, and to increase the number of his saints and elect in heaven; he represents his design of subduing Ireland as derived from the same pious motives. He considers his care of applying previously for the apostolic sanction, as a sure earnest of success and victory; and having established it as a point incontestible, that all Christian kingdoms belong to the patrimony of St. Peter, he acknowledges it to be his own duty to sow among them the seeds of the Gospel, which might in the last day fructify to their eternal salvation. He exhorts the king to invade Ireland, in order to extirpate the vice and wickedness of the natives, and oblige them to pay yearly, from every house, a penny to the See of Rome. He gives him entire right and authority over the island, commands all the inhabitants to obey him as their sovereign, and invests with full power all such godly instruments as he should think proper to employ in an enterprise, thus calculated for the glory of God, and the salvation of the souls of men."

We shall close this chapter by two extracts, which clearly prove, that the ancient Irish church was sound in the faith; that she held the pure doctrines of the Gospel; and that she was completely independent of the See of Rome; rejecting the Pope's assumed and

unscriptural ecclesiastical supremacy. The first extract is taken from Warner's History of Ireland. He says :—

“ The ancient Christians in Ireland, as it appears from some of their writings, knew of no other foundation of their church than Christ himself. It was not, indeed, till the twelfth century, that the Pope of Rome pretended to any jurisdiction, temporal or spiritual, in this country. The kings and people of Ireland preserved the nomination of archbishops and bishops in their own hands ; the clergy and laity of a diocese recommending a prelate, on a vacancy, to their king, and the king to the monarch, who had a negative to the nomination. Nor does it appear from any approved record of antiquity, that either visitations of the clergy were held in the name of the Pope, or that any indulgences were sought, by the Irish, at his hands. They might, probably, have a regard to the piety and learning of the bishops of Rome in those days ; but there are no footsteps to be found of any submission to that See, or any opinion of its infallibility : nay, there are instances of its preferring the judgment of other churches before it. Even Cardinal Baronius himself acknowledges ‘ that all the bishops of Ireland stood up in defence of the three chapters condemned in the fifth general council ; and when they perceived that the Church of Rome received the condemnation of them, they departed from her, and adhered to the rest of the schismatics that were in Italy, Africa, or other countries ; animated with this vain confidence, that they stood for the Catholic faith,

while they defended those things that were concluded in the council of Chalcedon.’”

In confirmation of this statement, we shall add the following observations from an authority, though more recent, not less entitled to credit—the Rev. John Graham :—“ The church of Ireland was well entitled to protection from England, which owed her a debt of magnitude for the conversion of Cumberland, and the counties adjoining to it, by St. Aidan and the other disciples of St. Columb-kille, educated at the isle of Iona, under the auspices of that early promoter of Christianity, at a time when ‘no Italian priest could tithe or toll on these dominions.’* The faith of the church of Ireland, for sum and substance the same this day as it was in the sixth century, as demonstrated by Primate Ussher in his account of the religion of the ancient Irish. It continued pure till the twelfth century, when England corrupted it by the introduction of Popery ; and even then, and through the succeeding ages, till the subjugation of the island by Queen Elizabeth’s armies, divine truth was not without a witness in it ; for the Culdees continued in existence, following the doctrine and discipline of the Greek church, independent of Rome, until the establishment of the Protestant faith, and the colonization of Ulster at the commencement of the seventeenth century.”

* In Appendix B, will be found some interesting extracts from Bede on the state of Christianity at this period.

CHAPTER XVII.

Architecture in Ireland before the twelfth century—The first stone church supposed to have been erected at Duleek—Stone oratory at Armagh—Church at Clonmacnoise, Kildare, Glendalough, Castledermot—Christian places of worship erected near the ancient heathen temples—Difference between the Saxon and Hibernian architecture—Grecian architecture introduced into Ireland during the ninth and tenth centuries—The Gothic during the eleventh and twelfth centuries—Strongbow's monument in Christ Church—First dwelling-house built of stone and lime by King Roderic in 1161—Inscription found at Castle-Lyons—Castles erected by the English settlers—Dublin as it was a thousand years ago.

It has been questioned whether, before the twelfth century, any stone and lime structures were to be found in Ireland. There is no record of any respectable dwelling-place, not even in Dublin, previous to that time; for, as we have already stated, there was not a house capable of accommodating Henry II. with his retinue. Sir Richard Cox states, they were "necessitated to build a long cabin with smoothed wattles, after the fashion of the country, and almost in the nature of a tent, which, being well furnished with plate, household stuff, and good cheer, made a

better appearance than had ever been seen in Ireland before that time ; and accordingly it was admired and applauded by the Irish potentates, who flocked thither to pay their duty to the king."

Yet, though there were no dwelling-places built of stone and mortar in those early times, there were such solid erections as the round towers, for religious purposes. The first stone church supposed to have been erected in Ireland was at Duleek. *Domliagh*, its ancient name, signifies a house of stone. Its foundation is ascribed to St. Kenan, in the fourth century. The ruins of the ancient cathedral, erected on the same site, still remain, and exhibit a fair specimen of pointed Gothic architecture. Within its walls the remains of Brian Boiroimhe were received with funeral honours, after the famous battle of Clontarf, from whence they were subsequently carried to Armagh to be interred.

In the annals of Ulster for the year 788, there is express mention of a stone oratory at Armagh ; and the Four Masters give an account of a stone church built at Clonmacnoise, by the monarch Flann Siona, in 904. In the century after, we have numerous instances of this kind of architecture. In the same annals there is also an account of a large stone church having a leaden roof, built at Armagh in 1020. Several churches are found in different parts of Ireland, situated near Rath, tumuli, and upright pillar-stones.

Chille-darruigh, which signifies the church or cell under the oak, appears to have been one of the primi-

tive churches in Ireland. This place now called Kildare, was famous during the middle ages, for its academy for the instruction of youth in the principles of learning and religion. The original founder of the church is said to have been St. Conlaeth, in the beginning of the sixth century.* It was what is termed a mother church, numbers of which, in subsequent periods, were deemed bishopricks; though prior to the tenth century, few of them were otherwise than convents of regular canons, who resided in or near their churches with their families and pupils. The heads of the Irish churches, though commonly styled bishops, were rather abbots, governing a convent of their clergy, who resided in community with their families.

Of the original church and city of Kildare, there are at present no remains. Both the church and other buildings were frequently destroyed by the Danes. The first demolition of the church and school of Kildare by the Danes, bears date 770. It was rebuilt and recovered all its former eminence, but was again destroyed by the same cruel spoilers; and its successive history furnishes a like detail. As often as the pious inhabitants repaired their church and seminary, the devastations of the enemy were renewed. Plunder and murder attended their steps—neither clergy nor students escaped. All those whose lives were spared, were taken into captivity. The buildings,

* Harris's Ware's Bishops, p. 380.

after frequent overtures, were reconstructed of less solid and more destructable materials, they consisted of wattled cottages.

The founder of an abbey on the eastern bank of the river Shannon in the county of Meath, is stated to have been St. Kieran, who was born about 516 in the reign of Tuathal. The ruins of the abbey still remain an object of interest to the traveller. In ancient times it was called Drum Tipraid, now Clonmacnoise, which word signifies "Retreat of the sons of the noble," probably from there having been a seminary there, for the education of the sons of chief men and princes. Many buildings were added at different periods to the original foundation, the whole inclosure occupying the space of two acres. It is sometimes called "The Seven Churches." It is, however, said, that nine churches were erected here by different kings and princes, whose burial-place it was. O'Melaghlin, king of Meath, built one of these churches, which was called Temple Ki. It "still continues to be the burial-place of his family." One among this interesting group of ruined churches has been repaired, and is now the parish church.

These ruins, in their fallen grandeur, strikingly evince "the princely munificence, refined taste, and artificial skill, employed in their erection." Harris, in his edition of Ware, gives the following account of one of the ruins,—“Before the west and north door of MacDermot's church stood a large old-fashioned cross or monument, much injured by time, on which was an inscription in antique characters, which nobody, that I could hear of, could read. The west and

north doors of this church, although but mean and low, are guarded about with fine-wrought small marble pillars, curiously hewn and polished, and the joints so close and even set, that the whole seems but one entire stone, as smooth as either glass or crystal."

Glendalough, or Cluayn Duach, which signifies The Valley of two Loughs. There are ruins of a city and cathedral church here, but no history extant gives an account of its erection or demolition. The site of the Seven Churches are traced, and give an additional interest to this place, so beautiful for situation from the scenery by which they are surrounded, as to attract numerous visitors, who are entertained with the legend of St. Kevin's bed, &c. The real name of the saint was Coragenus. He was the contemporary of Columbkille. The third of June is commemorated as the anniversary of his death, which took place in the year 618, by a *patron* at Glendalough.

In the ninth century there was a celebrated school in Castledermot, in the barony of Kilkea and Moon, in which Cormac, bishop of Cashel, was educated, and where he was interred in A.D. 907 or 908. This was a place of considerable strength, surrounded by a wall with four gates. In this century it was plundered by the Danes.

During the early ages, before the light of the Gospel shone on the western and northern parts of Europe, fires kindled on rocks, hills, and eminences, with religious ceremonies and superstitious invocations at the sepulchres of their heroes, were the only temples known to the ancient pagan inhabitants,

not only of the British islands, but almost of every other country.*

On the introduction of Christianity, the missionaries finding the people so attached to their ancient modes and places of worship, judged it expedient, in several instances, to convert the heathen fanes into temples of the new faith. Accordingly, wooden and stone crosses were erected on mounts, raths, and places of sepulchre,† at which marriages, christenings, and other rites of Christianity were performed. Such, at least, were the methods practised, on the conversion of the inhabitants of Iceland in the ninth century, by Irish missionaries.‡ And there is reason to suppose the same practice was followed in Ireland in the fifth century, from the several remains of such crosses, which are discovered on hills, raths, and tumuli, at this day. In subsequent periods, when proselytes became more numerous, edifices were erected for sacred purposes, and constructed of wattles, after the fashion of the country.

These primitive Hibernian churches have been aptly denominated by Irish antiquaries,|| sibbal, or barns, which indeed they much resembled. However, during the seventh and eighth centuries, the churches

* Whitaker's Hist. of Manchester. Schedius Dis. Ger. Mag. L. 2. c. Pelloutier Religion des Celtes. Rowland's Mona Antiq.

† "Many of the sacred mounts were originally tombs, or were artificial heaps, composed of earth or stones, called Barrows and Cairns. On the summit of some of these a pillar was erected."

‡ Ant. Celto Scand. p. 21.

|| Colgan in Sanct. Hib. Harris's Ware, vol. i.

of Ireland were most probably built after the fashion, and constructed of the same materials as those of Britain being framed of wood, well joined together, and covered with boards neatly polished.* Following this plan, we find the Irish missionaries from the eastern isles, on their arrival in Iceland, in the ninth century, constructing their churches of wood, in which were angular pillars and iron bells.† For it was not till towards the close of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century that churches and edifices of lime and stone were erected in Ireland. From that period, small stone churches, with stone pediments, roofs, and circular arches, became frequent in various parts of the island. These churches, both in their general form and ornamental architecture, were perfectly similar to those in Britain, and denominated Saxon.

There are, however, some distinguishing features between the Anglo-Saxon and Hibernian architecture. The Saxon churches were generally rectangular, though sometimes terminating on the east in a semicircle; their roofs were low, scarcely visible above the cornice, and generally covered with lead. Beneath were arched subterraneous vaults or crypts, and situated either on the west end, or the side.‡ The Hibernian churches, on the contrary, had high stone pediment roofs; and instead of under crofts, had

* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. i. 3, c. 4, L. 3, c. 25. Ingulf Hist. Croiland.

† Antiq. Celt. Scand. p. 15. ex landnamaboc.

‡ Grose's Antiq. Eng. vol. i. Introduc. Eddii Vita Wilfridi.

upper crofts, situated between the stone pediment roof, and the circular arch which covered the church ; and in this respect bore a striking resemblance to the Messarabic churches in Spain.*

Their steeples also, though sometimes square, were in general round and frequently detached from the building.† In other respects, the Messarabic, Saxon, and Hibernian architecture, retained a striking resemblance, and in all bore evident marks of the same origin—that is the Grecian ; though not that noble species which ornamented the cities of Athens and Rome, but the depraved style of the lower eastern empire, from the time of Heraclius in the seventh to the close of the eighth century. For several ancient churches of those periods are still remaining in Greece and Asia Minor, which have a striking resemblance to the western architecture before spoken of ; especially the altar arch of the church of St. Simeon the Stylite, at Mandra, in Natolia, which strictly agrees in its construction‡ and ornaments with those of Cormac's chapel, and Monaincha, in the county of Tipperary. In the island of Zante, ancient stone-roofed churches,|| of the same construction as those of Glendalough, in the county of Wicklow, and Killossi, in the county of Kildare, have been also discovered.

* Swinburne's Travels in Spain.

† Vide Churches of Monanincha, Cormac's Chapel, &c., in Ledwich's Irish Antiq.

‡ Drummond's Travels.

|| Plan of Zante, by a French Engineer, in 1757. Paris edit.

The irruption of the Saracens into Greece obliged many of the clergy and men of letters to retire into foreign countries. Several arrived in Britain, and some came to Ireland ; as we find Dobdan, a Greek, following Virgil, an Irish bishop, to the holy land. And during the eighth century several other Greeks and Orientals resided in this island, especially on their expulsion from Britain by the Church of Rome.* By these learned foreigners, there can be little doubt of the lower Grecian architecture being introduced into Ireland during the ninth and tenth centuries, which in process of time became general throughout the island. In this style Cormac's chapel was built about the year 901 or 908 ;† Glendalough, perhaps some years earlier ; Monaincha‡ about the year 1000 ; and a stone oratory, erected by Malachy O'Morgair, bishop of Armagh, about the year 1140. These edifices, though neither so large nor so elegant as those on the continent, were evidently of the same origin. From this period stone-roofed churches and round towers were the style adopted in those erected in this island, to the close of the middle ages, when they gave place to the Gothic.

The Gothic architecture was introduced into Britain, from the continent, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, by the Norman clergy ; and about the same period into Ireland by the Danes.|| These

* Ledwich's Irish Antiq.

† Harris's Ware, vol. i. p. 465.

‡ Ledwich in supra.

|| Godwin's Eng. Bishops, p. 187.

people, on their first conversion to the Christian faith, most probably constructed their churches after the manner of the Irish; but their countrymen in Britain brought them acquainted with the new method of building, and masons were brought over to construct their edifices in the Norman or Gothic fashion, in which Christ Church in A.D. 1038, and St. Patrick's in A.D. 1190, were erected in Dublin. The cathedral of Waterford, about A.D. 1100; that of Limerick in A.D. 1170; and Cork about the same period, were the first Gothic buildings seen in Ireland.* The native Irish also adopted this celebrated style of architecture soon after its introduction; and the new cathedral of Cashel, about the year 1170, and the abbey of Holy Cross, in 1182, are no mean specimens of the taste and style of the times.†

After the arrival of the English, the numerous monastic edifices erected in every part of the kingdom, diffused a general knowledge of the Gothic style; but the confusion which reigned in this unhappy country, and the general poverty which it produced among the inhabitants, prevented Gothic architecture from arriving at that state of perfection to which it attained in Britain, or even on the continent, and finally decayed with the suppression of the monastic orders.

It is conjectured that Mary's Abbey in Dublin, was founded by the Danes in A.D. 938. It was a most curious specimen of Gothic architecture, and proves

* Ware's Bishops. Harris's Dublin.

† Archdall's Monast. p. 658.

the early introduction of pointed arches in Ireland. Mellifont Abbey was founded by Donat O'Carrol, an Irish chieftain or prince, in the year 1157 or 1199. It was consecrated by Christian O'Conarchy, bishop of Lismore, and seventeen other bishops. At the suppression of the monasteries it was granted to Roger Moore, ancestor of the Marquis of Drogheda. Of these ruins, now rapidly sinking into decay, there remains only an octagonal baptistry and a small chapel; but the beautiful door-way which once adorned it, is demolished.

Bective Abbey was founded by Murchard O'Melaghlin,* king of Meath, in the year 1146. Its ruins are to be seen on the banks of the Boyne, between Trim and Navan. They are extensive, and contain some beautiful specimens of pointed arches, and other remnants of Gothic architecture.

Christ Church cathedral in Dublin, is said to have been founded by the Danes in 1038. Its original structure appears to have been in the Saxon style. It combines a mixture of the circular and pointed Gothic arches together.

The monument called that of Strongbow, Earl of Chepstow, in this church, is by some asserted to be an effigy of Thomas, Earl of Desmond, who was beheaded in Drogheda, in 1464, from whence it was removed to this abbey; which, like most buildings erected at the same period, exhibits a confused jumble of styles—an incongruous mixture of Gothic and Gre-

* Ware and Archdale.

cian, with little pretension to the taste and correctness of either. The black book of Christ Church, preserved in this Abbey, is still classed among our most ancient and authentic national records. In its original monastic state, this church was styled the Priory of the Blessed Trinity.

Dublin's second cathedral, called St. Patrick's, was erected on the site of a more ancient structure, said to have been founded by the saint himself; but we have no tradition concerning it. The present edifice was built by John Comyn, archbishop of Dublin, in the year 1190. Taken as a whole, this church exhibits the best specimen of the Gothic architecture of that age to be found in the country.

While the Irish, in olden times, spared no pains in building their churches in the best manner, they seem to have bestowed little thought or labour on their dwelling-houses. One reason assigned for this neglect, was the custom of tannistry and gavelkind which rendered possession and inheritance so uncertain, that no man cared to expend time and labour on that which might soon be taken from him.

When the first English settlers built castles here, they were little esteemed by the Irish chieftains. Sir John de Courcy built many castles in the north of Ireland, and in a friendly manner gave up two of them to Mac Mahon, a native chieftain. He held the gift in such contempt, that he destroyed them, and said he valued land more than stones, and preferred the green woods, as a dwelling-place, to cold stone walls.

Storey tells us of a house built by Roderic O'Con-

nor, of stone and lime, at Tuam, in 1161. It was such a rare sight in Ireland in those days, that it was called "Castrum mirificum"—wonderful house.

It is supposed, however, that stone dwellings were to be found in this country at an earlier period. In Smith's History of Cork, he mentions an inscription discovered on a chimney-piece, in pulling down the old walls at Castle-Lyons.—"Lehan O'Cullane, Hoc fecit. MCIII."*

But for some centuries after the erection of castles, they were not generally inhabited. Stanihurst mentions the castles of the Irish chieftains in A.D. 1584, as being deserted by their proprietors, by whom a low built mud cabin annexed to the castle was chosen as a more enjoyable residence by day, while for security by night, they slept in their castles. In these primitive times, another historian† says, "The fern forms and fern tables of O'Neil, were spread under the stately canopy of heaven."

From the landing of the English in Ireland, until the time of Queen Elizabeth, there were numerous castles built. From elevated grounds in some parts of the country, ten or twelve ruined castles may still be seen. There is a great uniformity in the plan—a square tower with three or four stories of small gloomy chambers, which received a dim light from

* Castle-Lyons was called Castle-Lehan, from the O'Lehans, an ancient Irish sept, to whom it belonged, with a great part of the surrounding county, which also was called by the name of its possessors.—*Smith's Hist. Cork.*

† Sir John Harmington.

narrow loop-holes in the massive wall. A deep entrenchment round the tower was called the bawn, into which all the cattle were driven at night to secure them from being plundered by neighbouring chieftains, or devoured by wolves.

At this period, feudal wars were frequent; chieftain against chieftain contending for possessions, while the different clans, with their cattle, fled for security to the bawn of their respective lord's castle. By force, not law, men kept what they had, until by a superior force they were dispossessed, and the vassals on either side, amongst themselves, waged the same warfare of petty spoliation.

The upper story of the square tower is said to have contained the state apartment, and recesses in the thick walls served for sleeping places. These edifices were castlelated, and for their erection the highest ground was chosen. In many of them there was a large marble chimney piece, twelve feet high, ten broad, well carved. The ornaments, in general, were the family arms, the date of the year, and a religious or historical inscription. But they were, for the reasons already assigned, uncertain dwelling-places for four centuries. Distracting feuds agitated this unhappy country, and put a stop to the improvement to which it might have attained. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth many of these castles were destroyed. In the reign of William III. the red brick mansion, with a straight avenue of trees was introduced in place of these castles and towers.

“There is a tradition that the castle of Bective is

the oldest in Ireland, being erected in the year 1014 by Maolseachlin or Malachy, king of Meath, who sent to Greece for architects to construct it ; a family of these foreigners still remaining, surnamed Greachach, or Greek, seems to strengthen history. Archbishop Ussher mentions a church at Trim, in the same county, called the Greek church."

Before we close this chapter, it may not be unacceptable to our young readers to subjoin a brief account of the metropolis of Ireland in those early times, which we have described.

More than a thousand years ago, a life was written of St. Kevin, and the author thus speaks of the city of Dublin:—"The city of *Aith-cliath* is situate in the northern region of Leinster, upon a strait of the sea: it is styled in the Scotie language Dubh-linn, which signifies Dark Bath. This city is powerful and warlike, and always inhabited by men most hardy in battles, and most expert in fleets."

"The Irish name of Dublin is *Baile Athaclath*, or *the town at the ford of the hurdles* ; and the name of that part of the Liffey on which it is built, *Duiblinn*, or the *Black Water*."

From Holinshed's Chronicle we extract the following account:—

"Dublin, the beauty and eye of Ireland, hath been named by Ptolemy in ancient time, Eblana. The Irish call it Balleer Cleagh, that is, a town planted upon hurdles. For the common opinion is, that the plot upon which the city is built, hath been a marsh

ground ; and for that by the art or invention of the first founder the water could not be voided, he was forced to fasten the quagmire with hurdles, and upon them to build the city. This city was builded, or rather the buildings thereof enlarged, about the year 155. For about this time there arrived in Ireland three noble Easterlings that were brethren, Avellanus, Sitricus, and Yuorus. Avellanus, the elder brother, built Dublin, and named it Avellana ; which, by corruption of speech, was afterwards called Eblana. Sitricus built Waterford, and Yuorus, Limerick. Dublin, as it is not in antiquity inferior to any city in Ireland, so in pleasant situation, in gorgeous buildings, in the multitude of people, in martial chivalry, in obedience and loyalty, in the abundance of wealth, in largeness of hospitality, in manners and civility, it is superior to all other cities and towns in that realm ; and therefore it is called the Irish or young London. The seat of this city is on all sides, pleasant, comfortable, and wholesome. If you would traverse hills, they are not far off. If campaign ground, it lieth of all parts. If you be delighted with fresh water, the famous river called the Liffey, named of Ptolemy, Lybnum, runneth fast by. If you will take the view of the sea, it is at hand. The only fault of this city is, that it is less frequented of merchants and strangers, because of the bare haven. Their charter is large. King Henry the Fourth gave this city the sword in the year of our Lord 1409, and was ruled by a mayor and two bailiffs, which were changed into sheriffs, by a charter granted by Edward the Sixth,

in the year of our Lord 1547. In which year John Reans and Robert Jams, two worshipful gentlemen, were colleagues in that office, and are therefore named, last bailiffs and first sheriffs that have been in Dublin. It appears by the ancient seal of this city, called *signum præposituæ*, that this city hath been in old time governed by a provost. The hospitality of the mayor and the sheriffs for the year being, is so great and bountiful, that soothlie (London forepriced) very few such officers, under the crown of England, keepe so great a port—none I am sure greater. The mayor, over the number of the officers that take their daily repast at his table, keepeth for his year, in manner open house. And albeit, in term time his house is frequented as well of the nobility as of the other potentates of great calling; yet his ordinarie is so good, that a very set feasts are provided for them. They that spend least in their mayoralty (as those of credit, yea, and such as bare the office have informed me) make an ordinary account of five hundred pounds for their viand and diet that year; which is no small summe to be bestowed in housekeeping, namely where vittels are so good, cheape, and the presents of friends diverse and sundry.”

“ Christ church, otherwise named *Ecclesia sanctæ Trinitatis*, a cathedral church, the ancientest that I can find recorded of all the churches now standing in Dublin. I take it to have been builded, if not in Avellanus’s time, yet soon after by the Danes. The building of which was both repaired and enlarged by Chritius, prince of Dublin, at the earnest request of

Donat the bishop ; and soon after the conquest it hath been much beautified by Robert Fitz-Stephens and Strongbow the erle of Pembroke, who with his sonne is in the body of the church intoomed.

“Saint Patrickes church, a cathedral church endued with notable livings, and divers fat benefices. It hath a chappell at the north doore, which is called the paroch church. This church was founded by the famous and worthie prelate John Commin, about the year of our Lord 1197. This foundation was greatly advanced by the liberality of King John. There hath risen a great contention betwixt this church and Christ’s church for antiquitie, wherein doubtless St. Patrick his church, by many years, is inferior to the other, St. Nicholas, St. Michael, St. Verberosse, or St. Werburgh, so called of a Cheshire virgin. The citizens of Chester founded this church, with two chapels thereto annexed ; the one called our lady’s chapel, the other St. Martin’s chapel. Her feast is kept the third of February. This church, with a great part of the city, was burned in the year 1301 ; but again, by the parishioners re-edified. St. Audeon, which is corruptly called St. Ouen or Owen, his feast is solemnized the 14th of August. The paroch of this church is accounted the best in Dublin, for that the greater number of the aldermen and the worships of the civitic are demurrant in the paroch,

“In the year 1315, Edward Bruice, a Scot, and brother to Robert Bruice, king of Scots, arrived in the north of Ireland ; from whence he marched on forwards with his army, until he came as far as Castle-

knocke. The citizens of Dublin being sore amazed at the sudden and scarborough approach of so puissant an enemie, burned all the houses in St. Thomas, his street, least he should upon his repaire to Dublin have anie succour in the suburbs. The maior (named Robert Nottingham) and comunaltie being in this distrees, raised downe an abbeie of the friar preachers, called St. Saviour, his monasterie, and brought the stones thereof to these places, where the gates now stand; and all along that waie did cast a wall for the better fortifieng the civitie, mistrusting that the walls that went along both the keies, should not have been of sufficient force to outhold the enemie. The Scots having intelligence of the fortifying of Dublin, and reckoning it a follie to laie siege to so impregnable a civitie, marched towards a place not far from Dublin, called the Salmon-leape, where pitching their tents for foure daies, they removed towards the Naas. But when the city was past this danger, King Edward II. gave strict commandment to the citizens to build the abbie they raised, saieng, that although laws were squatted in war, yet notwithstanding, they ought to be revived in peace.

“Osmantowne, so called of certain Easterlings or Normans, properlie the Danes that were called Ostmanni. They planted themselves hard by the water side neere Dublin, and discomfited at Clontarfe in a skirmish, diverse of the Irish.”

“There standeth neere the castell, over against a void room, called Preston his innes, a tower named Isoud’s tower. It tooke the name of la Beale Isoud,

daughter to Anguish, king of Ireland. It seemeth to have been a castell of pleasure for the kings to recreate themselves therein, which was not unlike, considering that a meaner tower might serve such single soule kings as were at those daies in Ireland.

“There is a village hard by Dublin, called of the said la Beale, Chappell Isoud.

“St. Stephen's Greene, Hogging Greene, the Steine, Ostmantowne Greene.

“In the further end of this field is there a hold commonlie termed Scaldbrother's Hole, a labyrinth reaching two large miles under the earth. This hole was in old time frequented by a notorious theefe named Scaldbrother, wherein he would hide all the bag and baggage that he could pilfer. The varlet was so swift on foot as he hath oft soones outrun the swiftest and lustiest young men in all Ostmantowne, maugre their heads bearing a pot or pan of them on his shoulders to his den. And now and then, in derision of such as pursued him, he would take his course directly under the gallows which standeth verie nigh his cave (a fitte signe for such an inne), and so being shrowded within his lodge, he reckoned on himself cock sure, none being found at that time so hardy as would adventure to entangle himself within so intricat a maze. But as the pitcher that goeth often to the water, at length cometh home broken ; so this lustie youth would not surcease from open catching, forcible snatching, and prire prolling, till time he was by certeine gaping groomes that laie in waite for him, intercepted, fleeing towards his couch, having

upon his apprehension no more wrong done him, than that he was not sooner hanged on that gallows, through which in his youth and jollitie he was wont to run.

“ There standeth in Ostmantowne Green, an hillocke, named Little John, his shot. The occasion proceeded of this. In the year 1189, there ranged three robbers and outlaws in England, among which Robert Hood and Little John were chiefeteins ; of all thieves, doubtless the most courteous. Robert Hood being betrayed at a nunnerie in Scotland, called Bricklies, the remnant of the crue was scattered, and every man forced to shift for himselfe. Whereupon Little John was faine to flee the realme by sailing into Ireland, where he sojourned for a few daies at Dublin.

“ The citizens being doome to understand the wandering outcast to be an excellent archer, requested him hartilie to trie how far he could shoot at random ; who, yielding to their behest, stood on the bridge of Dublin, and shot to that mole hill, leaving behind him a monument, rather by his posteritie to be woondered, than possibly by any man living to be counter-scored.

“ But as the repaire of so notorious a champion to anie countrie would soon be published, so his abode could not be long concealed : and therefore to eschew the danger of laws, he fled into Scotland, where he died at a towne or village called Moranie. Geraldus Mercator, in his cosmographic affirmeth, that in the same towne the bones of a huge and mightie man are kept, which was called Little John, among which

bones, the huckelbone or hip bone was of such largeness, as witnesseth Hector Boetius, that he thrust his arme through the hole thereof. And the same bone being suted to the other parts of his bodie, did argue the man to have been fourteen foot long, which was a pretty length for a little John. Whereby appeareth, that he was called Little John ironicallie ; like as we terme him an honest man, whom we take for a knave in graine."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ancient Altars for sacrifice—Description of one found at Tory-hill—Monumental kairns—Heap of witness—Cinerary Urns—Pillar-stones—Worshipping in Groves and at Pillar-stones forbidden—Remarkable caves—Their use—Description of one found at New Grange—Raths—Adjoining caves—Ancient Irish MS.—Sir Wm. Betham's translation of the Visitation of the Sick.

THERE are many vestiges of heathen altars in different parts of Ireland. They abound especially in the county of Down, as we learn from a work, entitled—"The Ancient and Present State of that County." Three sorts of monuments claim our attention. 1. The Stone Altar, Crom-liagh. 2. Kairns, or huge coped heaps of stones seen in many places. 3. Columns or pillar-stones; rude and unshapely. The Crom-liagh is the same as Crom-lech; the one is the Irish name, the other the British: and it is supposed that the first British colonists brought the word from Babel. The Hebrew term, *cœrum-luach*, signifies a devoted table or altar; the stones being placed like a table for this purpose. *Crumam*, in the Irish language, signifies an act of adoration by bowing, which the leaning pillar-stones represent. *Crom-cruachd*, or the stone of adoration, which stood in *Mach-sleachd*, the field of worship, in the county of Leitrim, was



Eng. by W. Greenham Dublin.

ANCIENT PAGAN ALTAR ON TORY HILL,

a celebrated idol, as we have already noticed. Many of these stone altars are also found in Wales.

In the Kilkenny Survey we find the following account of what is considered to have been an ancient pagan altar for offering sacrifices. "On the summit of Toryhill, called in Irish *Sliegh-grian*, or the hill of the sun, is a circular space covered with stones; the larger ones have been taken out and rolled down the hill for the use of the country people. There is still a large one near the centre, and there is an appearance of smaller ones having stood in a circle at a little distance from the heap, which is above sixty-five yards in circumference; within which, on the east side, is a stone raised on two or three of unequal size with an inscription, (see engraving) facing the west and the centre of the heap. The letters are deeply and well cut on a hard block of siliceous breccia; they are two inches high; between each is a space of about one inch, and a distance between the words of three inches. In Roman letters they would be, BELI DIUOSE."

We cannot but advert here to a striking peculiarity in the Romish churches. They call the table at which the Eucharist is administered, "The Altar." Now we know that an altar was used for sacrifice; and they profess to believe, that Christ is sacrificed daily as often as they celebrate the mass. God's own infallible word, however, proves quite the contrary; for it declares, Hebrews x. 10, 11, 12, 14, "We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ *once for all*. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offer-

ing oftentimes the same sacrifice, which can never take away sin. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In our Church Prayer Book, the table of the Lord is never once called "the Altar ;" such an appellation is a return to the Romish ritual. We never pretend to sacrifice our Lord, when in obedience to his own command ; we receive the bread and wine in remembrance of his great and all-sufficient atonement for sin. It is a curious fact that there is a stone inserted in the tables or altars at which the Romanists worship and receive the host.

The second sort of monuments called kairns are of very remote origin. The word *kairn* signifies heap. They are supposed to be the rude monuments of ancient times placed over the dead. In the county of Down there are two sorts of these, one large and the other small. On the summit of the highest point of Slieve-Croob, there is a very remarkable kairn, measuring seventy-seven yards round its base, and forty-five in circumference at the top. On one side it tapers to the height of eighteen yards, on the other to not more than six, by reason of its slanting position on the side of the mountain. There are smaller kairns erected on the top of this great one. The stones which compose this enormous heap are of different dimensions, but all portable. Quantities of them are scattered about, and cause an irregularity in the appearance of the whole, which probably was not the case in the original structure. The smaller kairns are

supposed to have been monumental erections over the bodies of good men, and also over those of malefactors.

It was the custom among the Romans to heap stones over such. The memory of a robber is perpetuated by an epitaph ascribed to Virgil.

“ *Balista* now beneath a load
Of stones, hath here his last abode ;
And travellers, by night and day,
May now securely pass the way.”

At the end of Homer's *Iliad*, there is a description of Hector's interment, whose grave corresponds with these kairns.

The crime of *Áchan* was perpetuated in this way, as we read in *Joshua* vii. 26. “And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day.” And of *Absalom* we read that “They cast his body into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him.” 2 *Sam.* xviii. 17. This custom is kept up in Ireland. When Christian burial is denied to a criminal or self-murderer, and his body is interred in some cross-way, every passer-by throws a stone on it, until a great heap is raised ; and also wherever a dead body has been found, after its removal, a heap of stones is raised in the place where it lay. This custom has given rise to a proverbial malediction in Wales and Ireland—That a *kairn* may lie over a person ; as if the immense weight of stones was intended to prevent his rising again.

There is a larger kairn than the one we have described, near *Newry*, at a place, from that circum-

stance, called *Karnbane*, in the county of Armagh. It measures 180 yards in circumference, and ten yards in its conical height. In the county of Tyrone, near Omagh, and in other places also, bones and urns, deposited in kairns, have been discovered.

Some think it probable, that the great kairns are the burial-places of the most famous commanders who fell in battle, and that their soldiers left this testimonial to their memory, each man casting a stone on their graves.

Another conjecture as to the cause of their being raised is, that they were to serve as witnesses to an agreement, such as we hear of in Genesis xxxi. between Laban and Jacob. "Now, therefore, come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between thee and me. And Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones. And they took stones and made *an heap*, and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jegar-sahaduthah, that is, The heap of witness. But Jacob called it Galeed, and Mizpeh, that is, a beacon or watch-tower; for he said, The Lord watch between me, and thee, when we are absent one from another." "And Laban said unto Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast between thee and me. This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm." "Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat

bread, and tarried all night upon the mount.” Laban and Jacob called this heap by different names ; but both had the same signification. Laban, has been supposed, spoke in the Syriac, the language of his country, Jegar-sahadutha, which signifies a heap of testimony ; Jacob in Hebrew, Galeed, that is, the heap of witness.

That many of the smaller heaps and mounds were tumuli, recent discoveries testify. Within the last century, small urns, filled with the ashes of the dead, were dug up in a rocky place at Ballymoyer, the estate of Sir Walter Synnot. Some of these he presented to the museum of the Royal Dublin Society, of which he was one of the first members.

Pillar-stones are not unfrequently found in connection with the kairns and crom-liagh, or stone altars. They are usually from six to nine feet high from the ground, and about ten feet in circumference ; but they vary both in length and breadth. They do not stand quite upright—their general inclination is to the east. Most of them at top have a smooth surface. In some instances, near the stone altar, there is a circle of these pillar-stones, and an entrance marked by two larger than the others.

Undoubtedly these are the remains of some ancient religion. But pillars are likewise frequently mentioned in Scripture ; and sometimes as a memorial to perpetuate the memory of the dead. Jacob set up a pillar upon the grave of Rachel. Gen. xxxv. 19. A pillar also was his *Bethel*, that is, the house of God. That same stone which had been his pillow, he erected

to perpetuate the remembrance of his heavenly vision. Gen. xviii. 1. It was also his place of worship, where he felt the presence of God. In like manner the passage of the children of Israel over Jordan was commemorated by the setting up of stones. By the command of God, Joshua pitched twelve stones in Gilgal, and assigns the reason—"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? that ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land." Josh. iv. 20. Such monuments were erected to the praise and glory of the wonder-working God; but they forgot his praise, and turned themselves to idols and the pillars: the high hills and the groves became the theatres of their idolatrous worship. "They set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree." 2 Kings xvii. 10.

A learned author observes, that the word used in this passage, "*Matzebah*, rendered by translators, *images*, properly signifies unhewn, uneffigied pillars, from the word *Jatzab*, to pitch; by which word the pillars of Rachel and Absalom, before mentioned, are expressed; whereas a true image is always in the original tongue, described by the words *Tzelom*, *pezel* or *terah*: from whence it is manifest, that these rude pillars, such as Rachel's and Absalom's, were set up for memorials; and that Jacob's pillar served both as a memorial of his vision, and libation and sacrifice."

When the Lord, by great thunders, discomfited the Philistines, "and they were smitten before Israel; then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh

and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, (that is, the stone of help), saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." 1 Sam. vii. 10, 12.

May we not suppose, that the pillar-stones in our country, as in Syria and Palestine, were not always devoted to idolatrous worship; though when the memorials of sacred things vanished, they were turned to that use, after the example of the Jews.

It is deeply to be deplored, that there are still many places in Ireland, where idolatrous worship is yet carried on with the concurrence of the Romish priesthood. An Irish island, once famous for its saints, Innismurry, is so surrounded by rocks, that the landing is difficult, and the difficulty is increased by reason of the swell and surf of the Atlantic, which is always breaking round the island. The priest is afraid of the sea, and never visits the island, but says mass on the main land. The inhabitants were idolaters from having had no better way pointed out to them. Now it is not so. Proper means are provided, and the true light is breaking in upon them. There is now a flourishing school, and from fifty to sixty children well instructed in the Scriptures by a very competent schoolmaster. An Irish reader has also been very useful in his instructions among those simple islanders. He braved the dangers of the sea during the tempestuous storms of last November to carry relief to their temporal wants, and to feed their souls with the bread of life. They received him gratefully and gladly. In their own native dialect they said, "Our heart laughs when we see you." The chief person in the island met him at

the school, where her own children are instructed. They give her the title of queen. Her husband is dead. He was a lineal descendant from their venerated St. Molash, who flourished in the twelfth century, and whose image is *still* worshipped on the island. It is a piece of painted wood, the figure of the prow of a ship, probably wrecked on, or near the coast; but they imagine it fell down from heaven. It is to be hoped, that the word of God, in their own language, will accomplish the work whereunto it is sent, in turning their minds from such vanities, to the living God.

A very old man told the Reader, that before he came among them, and before there was a school, they were always quarrelling among themselves. Sticks and stones were their offensive weapons, and in common use; but now these are laid aside; they have found better pursuits; they are learning to esteem every man their brother, and to live in peace and harmony; following the example of the blessed Saviour, who shed his blood to redeem a guilty world.

Dr. Smith, in his history of Cork, mentions a church at Ballyvourney, i. e. the town of the beloved, which is dedicated to St. Gobnate, who was abbess of a nunnery of regular canonesses in the sixth century. It is said, she was the daughter of O'Connor Sligo. The superstitious Irish visit this place on the Whitsun-Mondays, and on the fourteenth day of February, which is the saint's patron day. Some yards from the church there is a small stone cross, where her rood, or

image is set up on those days. Round this idol, the poor simple people go upon their knees, repeating prayers. They also tie handkerchiefs about its neck, believing that this will preserve them from sundry diseases. Near this cross there is a stone fixed in the ground, which is literally worn with the knees of the pilgrims. There is the saint's well in the same locality, and a circle of stones, about two feet high and nine in diameter, at a short distance, round both of which, there are paths worn by the knees of the votaries. The image is kept with great care in a chest, and never exposed to view but upon the festival days.

Dr. Smith, in a note, gives the indulgence, in Latin, which was granted by Pope Clement VIII. to all such as in devotion resort to this place. And in another note, he gives an extract from the Archbishop of Tuam's defence to his charitable address, which is as follows:—"I never could hear of any authentic or credible history of St. Gobnate; and yet I know, that in the county of Cork great devotion is paid to her, and her image, in which I never could hear that the poor people were restrained, but rather encouraged by their clergy. If the worship," he adds, "of real saints and their images, could be defended, (which it never can), yet the worship given to fictitious saints and images ought certainly to be suppressed. It looks," he says, "as if they feared to begin such a reformation, lest the eyes of the people should thereby be opened, and they should discover how they have hitherto been deluded." Upon this, Smith observes, he had been informed that the titular bishop of the

diocese had prohibited the adoration of this image ; but still it is persevered in, partly from their veneration for the image, and the gain it brought to its proprietor.

Dr. Smith visited this place in person, and the man who had the image in charge, told him that it was carried into Ivelary, an adjacent wild tract of country, to be sworn upon. The worship of this saint was also carried on in a mountainous place, in the parish of Kilshanick, where there is another St. Gobnate's well, which is visited on the 14th of February.

The writer of these Sketches heard from good authority, that there are places in the south of Ireland, where many of the ignorant people put shoes, a great coat, and candles into the coffin with the dead body, also a hammer to knock loudly at the gate of Purgatory ; and that it is a common practice to write a letter to St. Peter, inclosing money, which is placed in the hand of the deceased before the coffin is closed.

Before idolatry was introduced into Ireland by Tighermas, the Celtic religion was that which prevailed. What that was, we learn from our own historians, and also from learned foreign authors. "It was the same as the old patriarchs. They worshipped one supreme Being, not in temples, as the Greeks and Romans, but in groves consecrated to him. They believed in a future state of rewards and punishments, suitable to their behaviour in this. They offered victims, and celebrated some festivals in honour of him ; and in all or most of their religious rites, during a

Fig I

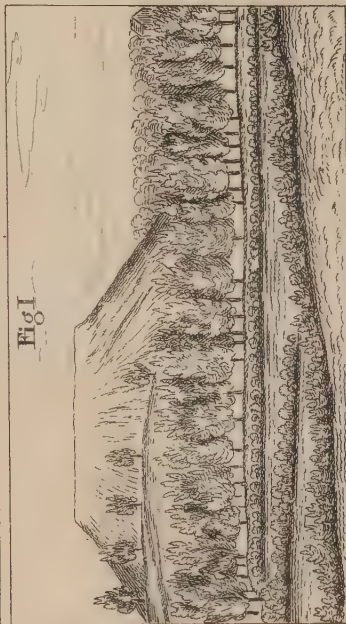
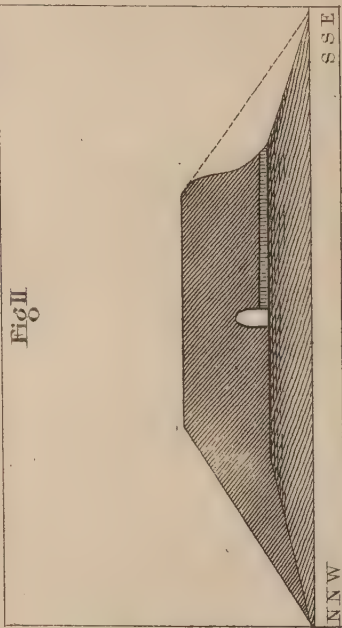


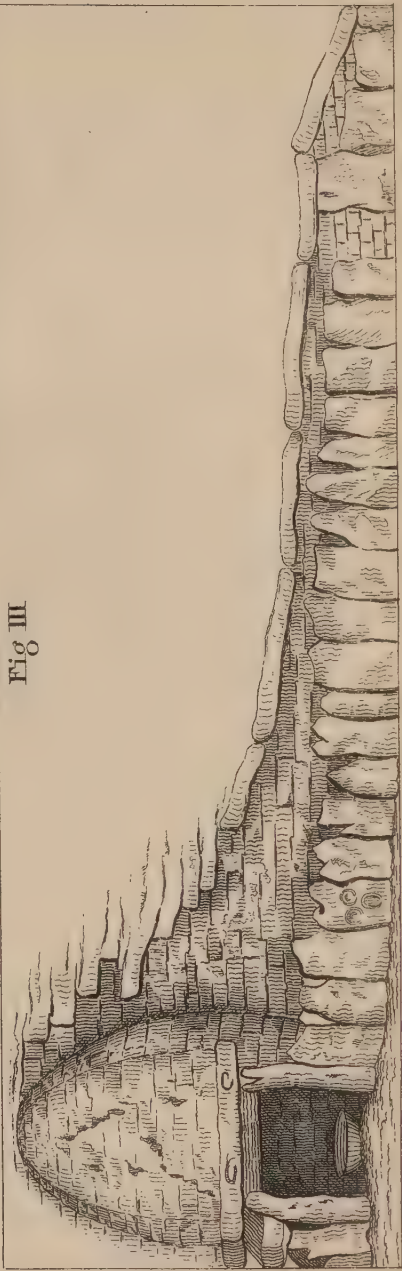
Fig II



The Barrow at New Grange.

Section of the Tumulus

Fig III



Section of the Gallery & Dome.

long series of ages, observed a great simplicity.”—*Univ. Hist.* From the same authors we learn, that there was “Affinity between the Celtic religion and that of the patriarchs and Jews, as it was extracted from the religion of the Gauls.”

Remarkable caves found in Ireland come next under consideration. And here too, we find an analogy to Scripture. They were of two descriptions, and served for two different purposes. They were places of sepulture, and hiding places. Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah from the sons of Heth, to be a possession of a burying-place for Sarah, at that time, and for other branches of his family in after times.

In times of danger, caves afforded a secure retreat. Thus, “five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.” Josh. x. 16, 17. We hear of Saul and David retiring into the same cave as a place of rest and security. 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. “Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave,” from the persecution of Jezebel. And Elijah took shelter in a cave at Horeb. But those which probably resembled most the caves of the Irish, were the “Dens made by the children of Israel,” when the hand of Midian prevailed against them; “which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong-holds.”

The following is an account of a large cave near Drogheda. “The most remarkable curiosity we saw by the way was a stately mount, at a place called New Grange, near Drogheda, (see engraving), having a number of huge stones pitched on and round about it,

and a single one at the top. The gentleman of the village, (Mr. Charles Campbell), observing that under the green turf, this mount was wholly composed of stones, employed his servants in carrying off a considerable quantity. At last they came to a very broad flat stone, rudely carved, and placed edgeways, at the bottom of the mount. This was the door of a cave which had a long passage, through which we were forced to creep; but still, as we went on, the pillars on each side were higher and higher, until we came into the cave, which we found twenty feet high. On either side, we observed a cell, or apartment, and a third opposite the entrance. In the side apartments, there were very broad shallow stone basins. In the right-hand apartment, there were two of these, the one within the other. We observed that water dropt into the upper basin, and conjectured that the lower was intended for the overflowing liquid, whether this water were sacred, or the blood of the victims in sacrifice, thus preserved, that none might fall to the ground. The great pillars round this cave, supporting the mount, were neither hewn nor wrought. Round the basins, and at the entrance to the cave, there were pillars rudely sculptured in a spiral form, like a snake, but not clearly designated. There was no flooring at the entrance nor in the cave, but loose stones under the feet. Several bones have been found in the cave, and part of a large elk's head."

Sir T. Molyneux, in noticing this place, says, "I have not heard of any thing of this kind that equals it in Ireland. It is 1000 feet in circumference at the

bottom, and round the flat surface at the top measures 300 feet ; in the perpendicular it rises about 150, and is seated so advantageously upon a rising ground, that it is seen from all parts round, at a vast distance, and from its top yields a delightful prospect of all the adjacent country." He then describes the huge unwrought pillar stones in circular order, at some distance, round the base, some fallen, other carried away. The narrow entrance to the cave was evidently contrived for concealment, as is the case in similar mounts. The hole is so small, that but one man can enter on his hands and feet. The passage is 80 feet in length and three wide, and gradually rises from four feet high to ten. The walls or sides of this narrow passage are composed of large flag stones set broad-ways, closely wedged together, in their rude and natural state, differing in size as the height of the gallery requires. The whole is covered over with the same description of flag stones, laid all along, some of which, in the covering, measure fully nineteen feet in length. The cave or vault is of an irregular form ; the whole made up of huge flat stones, and firmly compacted, without the use of mortar, clay, or any kind of cement that can be discovered. Crevices and interstices are filled up, and closely wedged with thin flat stones, split for that purpose. At the first opening of the cave, the bones of two dead bodies were found entire on the floor.

"The stone basins, or cisterns, found in the cells, were scalloped round the edge, the cavities shallow, the diameter above two feet in width, and the height

from the floor about eighteen inches. The cistern, or cisterns, the one within the other, in the cell to the right of the cave, was the better shaped and carved than the others ; but the workmanship is barbarous. There is not the least rule or order in the ornamental work on the stones : they consist of spiral, circular, and waived lines, but no attempt at any inscription.

“ The basins in the several niches of the cave were certainly intended for altars, to offer sacrifice upon to their pagan gods, in favour of the dead.

“ Two Roman golden coins were found buried among the stones near the surface of the mount. One was of Valentinian, the first emperor of that name ; his head on one side of the medal, and round it this legend, Dominus Valentinianus, pius, fœlia, Augustus. On the reverse, two imperial figures sitting on a throne of state, supporting a globe, as an emblem of the empire, with an image of victory over them, and a branch of laurel sprouting up between them. These figures express Valentinian himself, and his son Gratian, to whom the father gave the title of Augustus, upon his obtaining a great victory over the Germans at Solicinium, about the year of Christ, 368. The other golden coin was of the emperor Flavius Theodosius, called the great. His head is on one side, with a similar inscription round, and the reverse also the same.

“ This Roman money must have been brought to Ireland by the trading Danes, as being the coin current at that time in commerce throughout Europe. It

is a point ascertained beyond all doubt, that the Romans never were in possession of this island, though their gold and silver money are often found here."

Thomas Pownal, Esq.,* who gave an account of New Grange to the Society of Antiquaries in London, "supposes that it must be of great antiquity; introduced by the *Magi*, (or *Gaurs*, as they were sometimes called), who were zealously animated to propagate their patriarchal faith and religion among the uncivilized inhabitants of the uncultured world. We read of some of these missionaries even in Tartary, and we find them settled in the British isles. In later times they were called by a Celtic name, Druids; although they were originally called in these isles by their eastern name, Gaurs; as their great Bethel was, even in very late times, *Choir-Gaur*. The same spirit, genius, and views, which led the Jesuits of later days to form the missions of Paraquay, led these Magi to fix their residence in Britain, and to form like missions there. The same species of sepulchral monuments, and the mode of burial, may be traced through Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, even to the Stepps of Tartary."

The Pyramid is entirely composed of pebble or cogle stones, such as are commonly used in paving; and as there are none of the same kind to be found nearer than the sea-coast, at the mouth of the Boyne, they must have been conveyed at immense labour from thence, a distance of twelve miles or more.

* Gentleman's London Mag. Feb. 1773.

It has long served as a stone quarry to the country round, and is now a mere ruin of what it was. The road in every direction is paved with its stones, and thus the gallery and cemetery underneath were discovered.

The raths, or forts of the Danes and Irish chieftains, were treated of in the former part of these Sketches, and should not again be introduced, but that it is necessary to distinguish them from the sepulchral mounts, with which they are often confounded. The difference is, that the raths are placed on high ground. The meaning of the Irish word *rath*, is a hill, or raised place. They are of a circular form as well as the mounts, but they are always intrenched all round, sometimes with a double ditch and great rampart between for security. The monumental heaps are frequently placed on an eminence also, but never with any inclosure like that of the rath. The English name for these mounts is burrow, from the old Saxon word, *beorg* or *burg*, a hill; from whence is derived the word in present use, to bury, and burial.*

The raths are of various dimensions; some not exceeding fifty feet in diameter, and about the same in height. Others in circumference measure three hundred yards. One of the largest we hear of, called the king of Ulster's fort, near Armagh, includes in its circumference eighteen or twenty English acres. They vary in form as in size. Some are hollow at the top, to shelter and defend the men

* Nat. Hist. of Ireland.

within. Others rise high and towering in the centre above the fort, so as to command a view of all below, and round about. The word rath seems to have had three significations, sometimes comprehending a village, as also a security, and a high place. *Dun* is another name given it, that is, a fortified place on a hill.

Sir Thomas Molyneux says, that “Many of the larger forts have caves within them under ground, that run in straight, long, narrow galleries. Some of these above twenty-six feet in length, five high, and five broad; these make returns, and join the one to the other in almost right angles. Where they meet, the passage is enlarged, and at the corners form a sort of closets—square in some mounts, round in others. The walls or sides of the galleries are made of flat stones, laid on one another, without any mortar to join them, like our dry walls. The passage is roofed with flag stones laid across the side walls; which being under ground, and in no way exposed to the weather, are very durable, and far less subject to decay than the strongest walls of stone and lime, though built with the greatest skill of masonry, that lie exposed and open to the air.

“These close and hollow passages lying under ground, so strait and small, without all light, could never be designed to accommodate men, except for the convenient disposal of their stores, their arms, provisions, and other necessaries, that here lay secure from weather, and at hand, still ready for their use,

and under such a guard, that kept them safe from thieves or enemies.

“As for the smallest sort of forts, of ten and fifteen yards in diameter, they were so low and of such confined dimensions, they could not possibly contain any number considerable enough to form a garrison. They seem designed for habitations only, and the dwellings of single families, that by the means of these high situations, lived more secure from sudden onsets of their enemies inhabiting the country round. These smaller forts are so very numerous in some parts of the kingdom, particularly in the county of Down, where they lie so close together, that for many miles they stand in sight, and call of each other, it is not improbable they were dispersed up and down here, more frequent than elsewhere, by reason that the Danes, and other northern nations, that in those days infested Ireland, first landed in these parts of the island, as lying nearest to the countries from whence they came, and so the most convenient for their settlement; from thence they made incursions into all the other parts of the kingdom, till they had reduced the whole to subjection.”

In the former part of this work there are copious extracts from Sir Wm. Betham's Antiquarian Researches. There are some further particulars relative to the purely apostolic doctrine of the ancient Irish, and their veneration for the Scriptures, which must not be omitted. An account is given of a box bought by Henry Monck Mason, Esq., on which he wrote an

essay, which was read to the Royal Irish Academy, and afterwards published in their transactions. The title of the essay is—"Description of a rich and ancient box, containing a Latin copy of the Gospels, which was found in a mountain, in the county of Tipperary," &c.

This box is said to have been found in a cave, and Sir W. Betham, in noticing the ancient Irish MS. which it contained, says, "it possesses great interest. It is perhaps, the only Irish MS. extant of such remote antiquity, intended as a portable book for the service of the priest on his external duties of visiting the sick, &c. The MS. is a small quarto size, is seven inches high, and five and a half broad. It contains seventy-four membranes, of which St. Matthew's Gospel occupies fourteen and a half, St. Mark's eleven and a half, St. Luke's twenty-three and a half, the office for 'the Visitation of the Sick,'* two, and the Gospel of St. John twenty-two and a half."

We have now noticed all the subjects and events which we designed to introduce into the present volume. In our second volume, we shall continue the history down to the present time, commencing with the means Henry employed to gain the entire possession of Ireland; and the unsuccessful efforts made by the Irish to retain their independence.

* For a Translation of the "Visitation of the Sick," see Appendix, page 332.

APPENDIX.

The following translation of “The Visitation of the Sick,” by Sir W. Betham, is supposed to have been in use in the ninth century. The entire is inserted, in order to show how free the doctrine is from any taint of Popery; though, it must be confessed, not unclouded in all points; for instance, in attributing to the holy sacrament the quickening power which belongs exclusively to the Holy Spirit: and in treating of the anointing with oil, James v. 14, 15, there is also a want of clearness; but on the whole, it shows a great knowledge of that word which maketh “wise unto salvation.”

“Brethren, let us pray for our brother N. that the Lord God may mitigate the present evil of his severe indisposition; that the pity of the Lord may deign to cure him by heavenly medicine; and that he who gives life, may also give health, through our Lord.

“Dearly beloved brethren, let us humbly pray to the Almighty and living God, to whom it is most easy to renew and to confirm all works, for our infirm brother, that the creature may feel the hand of the Creator, either in rejecting or receiving, wholly through his name, and by whose work he may be thought worthy to be restored, through our Lord.

“Holy Lord, Almighty God, author of the eternal

universe, by whom all things live ; who raiseth the dead, and calleth those things into being which are not, as those that are : thou who art the beginning, mercifully exert thine accustomed influence, in this thy remedy, through our Lord.

“ Dearly beloved brethren, let us beseech God, in whose bountiful hand is the life of the living and the dying, that he may cure the infirmity of his body, as well as grant salvation to his soul ; and that which, by merit, he may not deserve, may follow, by grace to our prayers, through our Lord.

“ O God, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but that he may be converted, and live ; forgive him his sins, his heart being turned towards thee, and grant him everlasting life, through our Lord.

“ O God, who wilt always give to thy creatures holy dispositions, incline thine ear to us, beseeching thee ; favourably regard thy servant N., labouring under the affliction of a sickly body ; visit him with thy healing power, even to the remedy of heavenly grace, through our Lord.

“ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable ; for now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept : for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, and as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

“ In that day came unto him the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, and questioned him. Jesus, answering, said unto them, ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God ; for,

in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but shall be as the angels in heaven : of the resurrection of the dead, do you not read that which is said by God, saying to you, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, not the God of the dead, but of the living ? Hearing these things, the multitude wondered at his doctrine.

“ Taught by divine institution, confirmed also by divine authority, we presume to say :—I believe in God, the Father Almighty ; I believe also, in Jesus Christ, his Son ; I believe also, in the Holy Ghost. I believe in a life after death ; I believe that I shall rise again.

“ I anoint thee with holy oil,* in the name of the Trinity, that thou mayest obtain everlasting salvation.

“ Grant to us, thy servants, that praying with faith, we may be worthy to say, *Our Father*, &c.

“ *The sick man sings if he can ; if not, the priest sings in his stead.*

“ Accept, O Lord, the words which thou hast commanded ; forgive our presumption, because thou hast ordained it. It is ignorance in us not to keep the precept by which we are commanded to say, *Our Father*, &c.

“ Deliver us from all evil, and keep us always in every good, O Christ Jesus, author of all good, who reignest for ever.

“ The peace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with us.

* James v. 14, 15.

“ Here peace is given him, also say,—

“ The peace and fellowship of thy saints, O Christ, be always with us.

“ He answers, Amen.

“ You give him the Eucharist, saying—

“ The body as well as the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, preserve thy soul to life everlasting.

“ After receiving, he says—

“ We give thanks to God, the Father Almighty, that he has quickened us, of earthly origin and nature, by the gift of his holy sacrament.

“ Then the prayer—Shew us thy mercy, O Lord.

“ Convert us, O Lord, preserve our health, and keep us in safety, who reignest for ever and ever.

“ He then says—To the cup of salvation I will call you :—

“ And—My strength shall be your safety :—

“ And—Refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, we may always say to thee :—

“ And—Praise the Lord all ye nations :—

“ And—Offer the sacrifice of the just to the Lord, &c.

“ Then you may signify, and say peace is given.

“ That the Lord may bless thee and keep thee, and preserve thy countenance to thee, and that he may give thee peace.

“ He answereth—We give thanks to thee, O God, by whose permission we may celebrate thy holy offices, and from thee we implore the gifts of holiness, who reigneth for ever.”

THE IRISH DEATH SONG, A, page 151.

The following caione or death song, was composed by a man named Donoghue, of Boaringloater, or Affadoion, in the western part of the county of Cork, whose three sons and son-in-law were lost at sea more than sixty years since.

1. It was on a rainy Monday. A fair gale blew, and my sons left us half an hour before sun-rise to fish in the sea. My children were driven far away to be drowned. This year has been the year of my rain for ever.

2. Cormac, (Charles), my eldest child, with his gun could kill every kind of bird that fled in the air. The wild goose and wild duck ; the partridge, the grouse, and the black plover of the lonely mountains.

3. Cormac, my dear ! flower of young men : who was mild and well educated—was just, and clean, and good. Oh, glorious King of Heaven ! if you had spared him to me. It was the loss of him that broke my heart entirely. I might—I could have parted with the rest.

4. Donal, my dear Donal, the youngest of my sons ! It was this day fortnight he was washed on shore, without strength or life in his body. I saw him as he lay lifeless on the shore ; and my heart was cold, and dead, and motionless at the sight.

5. Children ! dear children ! do you pity me ? do you see me ? Look on me, your poor father crying and lamenting for the life of his life—the soul of his soul ! What is he now ? A poor old broken-hearted man, weeping alone in the coldest corner of the stranger's home.

6. Great is my grief and sorrow ! Sadness and tears weigh heavy on my Christmas. To have my four young and stout men thrown on the will of the wild waves ! If the great ocean, or the dark caves of the ocean would restore three bodies that now lie in it, how should they be caioned and lamented in Affadown.

7. Great is my grief and sorrow, that you did not all go from your father on board ship ; or if my sons left me for a season, like the wild geese, to go to another land, then might I have expected from my master the help of my four mild and clever young men at some future time,

THE SMITH'S CAIONE.

The story connected with the following caione is somewhat romantic. A young man, a smith, left his mother and sister, and his home near the river, North Bridge, in this county, and married in a distant part of Ireland. Some years afterwards, his sister, travelling in that part of the country, asked at a cottage for a night's lodging. Her request was granted, and she was invited to accompany the family to a wake. She went with them, and in the lifeless body recognised her brother. On beholding him she burst into the following lamentation:—

1. Brother, dear brother! your long absence did not raise you in the world. You went far from home, and found a wife who knew not how to love you. No one here knows your family. You are in the midst of strangers; they only know that you were a smith, and son to a smith from the Blackwater side.

2. Oh, if I had your cold limbs by the Blackwater side, or on the banks of the Arobeg, or by the Bride, Mary, and Kate, and Julia, would weep over you! and your mother would cry most sweetly over you! and I, oh I, would cry more than I *could* over you.

3. Oh brother, dear, dear brother! I might have known that you were laid low, when I did not hear the sound of the forge, and the sledges striking strong and noisily.

4. Dear brother, and my darling brother! you had the tokens of a wife that did not love you. She left my brother hungry in the winter, and dry in the spring, without clothes to cover him, and enduring long fasting.

5. You woman his wife! my brother's wife—you woman with the dry eyes—you woman who are both deaf and dumb; go home, go any where, leave your husband to me; and I will mourn for my brother.

6. You woman above with the dry eyes; my brother's wife come down, and I will caione you. You will get another husband if you are young enough; but I can never get another brother.

[*The Priest comes forward and speaks.*]

7. Hold your peace, stubborn stranger. Why will you provoke your brother's wife?

[*She answers.*]

Hold your peace, stubborn Priest; read your prayers, take up your book, earn your half-crown, and go home. I will caione my brother.

* * The originals of these productions were collected in different parts of Munster, principally in the county of Cork, and translated by I. E. C., Esq.

WORDS OF AN OLD IRISH AIR.

“Count not the hours while their silent wings,
Still waft them in fairy flight;
For feeling, warm from the purest springs,
Shall hallow this scene to night.

And while the magic of joy is here,
And the colours of life are gay;
Let us think upon those who have loved us dear,
The friends who are far away.

Few are the hearts that have proved the truth
Of their early affection's vow;
Then let those few, the beloved of youth,
Be dear in their absence now.

Oh, vivid long in the faithful breast
Shall the gleam of remembrance play!
Like the lingering light in the fading heart,
When the sun-beam has passed away.

Soft be the dream of their pleasant hours,
Calm be the seas they roam;
May the path they travel be strewn with flowers,
Till it brings them in safety home.

And if we, whose hearts are o'erflowing thus,
Ourselves should be doomed to stray,
May some kind orison rise on us
When we shall be far away.”

B, page 289.

The following quotations from the venerable Bede's Ecclesiastical History, brought together by Sir W. Betham, are invaluable; and as this learned author remarks—"his testimony is above suspicion, and entitled to our full credence. His prejudices had a bias against the conclusion, which his testimony compels us to draw."

Book 3rd, Chapter iii.

“ A.D. 635. Oswald, shortly after he came to the crown (of Northumberland), being desirous that his people should be instructed in the truths of the Christian faith, whereof he had great evidence of the truth, by vanquishing his barbarian enemies; he sent to the chief of the Scots, among whom, in his exile, he had received the sacrament of baptism, as did the soldiers who were with him, requesting them to send a prelate, by whose preaching and ministry the English, whom he ruled, might be instructed in the gifts, and receive the sacraments of the faith of our Lord. Nor were these things, which he desired, denied or withheld from him. Bishop Aidan, a man of great meekness, godliness, modesty, and piety, having a great zeal for God, arrived, and the king appointed him to be bishop of Holy Island (Lindisfarne), as he desired. This place, by the flowing of the tide, is twice a-day made an island, and as often, by the receding of the water, made part of the main land. By the advice of this good bishop, the king being ever ready to follow it, the church of Christ was much enlarged in his dominions. And whereas, the bishop was unskilful in the English tongue, and the king understanding the Scottish, by reason of his long exile in Ireland, when the bishop preached the faith of Christ, the king interpreted the heavenly word to his generals and subjects, which was a gratifying and a pleasing sight. For a long time, many persons came from Ireland into the English provinces of Britain, under the government of king Oswald, with great devotion, to preach the gospel of Christ, and baptizing all who believed. Churches were built in convenient places, and the people gladly assembled together to hear the word of God. Of his great bounty the king granted lands and possessions for the foundation of religious houses; and old persons, as well as young children, were trained up by the Scots in the observance of regular discipline; for they were, for the most part, monks who came to preach. Aidan was a monk of the island called Hii, which house was, for a long time, the chief of all the religious houses of the northern Scots and Picts, which were subject to it. The island, indeed, belongs to Britain, being separated from it only by a very narrow arm of the sea; but by free gift of the Picts, who inhabit that part of Britain, it was granted lately to the Scottish monks in reward for their virtuous preaching the faith of Christ.

Book 3. Chap. iv.

“ A.D. 563. Columba, a distinguished priest and abbot, both by his habit and holy life, came from Ireland to preach the word of God to the Picts who dwelt in the north parts of Britain,

that is, to those who were separated by those tremendous mountains from the Picts who dwelt in the more southern parts, who had long before abandoned idolatry, and embraced the true faith, which was preached to them by the reverend and holy bishop Ninia, a Briton, who had been duly and regularly instructed in the true faith at Rome, &c.

“Columba came to Britain in the ninth year of the reign of the potent Brideus, the son of Meilochon, king of the Picts, and by his learning and example converted that nation to the faith, for which service the aforesaid island was given him to found a monastery. The isle is not large, but about sufficient for the support of five families, according to the English estimation. His successors keep it to this day; and he was buried there, aged seventy-seven years, thirty-two after he came to preach in Britain.

“Before he went to Britain, he founded a noble monastery in Ireland, which, from the great quantity of oaks in the neighbourhood, is called in the Scottish language, Dearthach, that is to say, the field of oaks. From both these monasteries many religious houses, both in Britain and Ireland, were founded by his disciples, of all which the monastery in the island is the chief house.

“This island was always governed by an abbot, who is a priest, to whom the whole country, and the bishops themselves were, after a strange and uncommon custom, subject, according to the example of the first doctor, who was not a bishop, but a priest and a monk. Many things are written of his life and actions by his disciples; but we know certainly, that he left successors of great continence, distinguished charity, and holy life. In observing the feast of Easter, they trusted to uncertain guides; and it is not surprising, considering that no man sent unto them the decrees for the keeping thereof.”

Book 3. Chaps. v. xvi.—xxv.

“From this island, therefore, and from this monastery was Aidan sent to instruct the English in the faith of Christ: at the time that Sigenius was abbot, he accepted the office of bishop,” &c.

“Finanus, a holy man from Hy, succeeded Aidan, and was bishop of Northumberland a long time. He built a church in Lindisfarne (Holy Island), for the bishop’s see; not of stone but of oak wood, and with thatch, as the Scotch custom was.”

THE END.

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